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LETTERS

TO

MOTHERS,

BY

MRS. L. H. SIGOURNEY.

HARTFORD:

HUDSON AND SKINNER, PRINTERS.

1838.

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PREFACE, ADDRESSED TO MOTHERS.

You are sitting with your child in your arms. So am I. And I have never been as happy before. Have you? How this new affection seems to spread a soft, fresh green over the soul. Does not the whole heart blossom thick with plants of hope, sparkling with perpetual dew-drops? What a loss, had we passed through the world, without tasting this purest, most exquisite fount of love.

Now, how shall we bring up this babe, which Heaven hath lent us? Great need have we to repeat the question of the father of Samson, to the angel who announced his birth, "how shall we order the child?" Surely, we shall unite with fervour in his supplication to the Father of Angels, "teach us what we shall do unto the child."

Are you a novice? I am one also. Let us learn together. The culture of young minds, in their more advanced stages, has indeed been entrusted to me, and I have loved the office. But never before, have I been so blest, as to nurture the infant, when as a germ quickened by Spring, it opens the folding-doors of its little heart, and puts forth the thought, the preference, the affection, like filmy radicles, or timid tendrils, seeking where to twine.

Ah! how much have we to learn, that we may bring this beautiful and mysterious creature, to the light of knowledge, the perfect bliss of immortality! Hath any being on earth, a charge more fearfully important, than that of the Mother? God help us to be faithful, in proportion to the immensity of our trust.

The soul, the soul of the babe, whose life is nourished by our own! Every trace that we grave upon it, will stand forth at the judgment, when the "books are opened." Every waste-place, which we leave through neglect, will frown upon us, as an abyss, when the mountains fall, and the skies shrivel like a scroll. Wherever we go, let us wear as a signet-ring, "*the child! the child!*" Amid all the musick of life, let this ever be the key-tone, "*the soul of our child.*"

L. H. S.

LETTER I.

PRIVILEGES OF THE MOTHER.

MY Friend, if in becoming a mother, you have reached the climax of your happiness, you have also taken a higher place in the scale of being. A most important part is allotted you, in the economy of the great human family. Look at the gradations of your way onward,—your doll, your playmates, your lessons,—perhaps to decorate a beautiful person,—to study the art of pleasing,—to exult in your own attractions,—to feed on adulation,—to wear the garland of love;—and then to introduce into existence a being never to die;—and to feel your highest, holiest energies enlisted to fit it for this world and the next.

No longer will you now live for self,—no longer be noteless and unrecorded, passing away without name or memorial among the people. It can no more be reproachfully said of you, that “you lend all your graces to the grave, and keep no copy.” “My cousin Mary of Scotland, hath a fair son born unto her, and I am but a dead tree,” said Queen Elizabeth, while the scowl of

discontent darkened her brow. In bequeathing your own likeness to the world, you will naturally be anxious to array it in that beauty of virtue, which fades not at the touch of time. What a scope for your exertions, to render your representative, an honour to its parentage, and a blessing to its country.

You have gained an increase of power. The influence which is most truly valuable, is that of mind over mind. How entire and perfect is this dominion, over the unformed character of your infant. Write what you will, upon the printless tablet, with your wand of love. Hitherto, your influence over your dearest friend, your most submissive servant, has known bounds and obstructions. Now, you have over a newborn immortal, almost that degree of power which the mind exercises over the body, and which Aristotle compares to the "sway of a prince over a bond-man." The period of this influence must indeed pass away;—but while it lasts, make good use of it.

Wise men have said, and the world begins to believe, that it is the province of woman to teach. You then, as a mother, are advanced to the head of that profession. I congratulate you. You hold that license which authorizes you to teach always. You have attained that degree in the College of Instruction, by which your pupils are

in your presence continually, receiving lessons whether you intend it or not, and if the voice of precept be silent, fashioning themselves on the model of your example. You cannot escape from their imitation. You cannot prevent them from carrying into another generation, the stamp of those habits which they inherit from you. If you are thoughtless, or supine, an unborn race will be summoned as witnesses of your neglect.

“ Meantime, the mighty debt runs on,
The dread account proceeds,
And your *not-doing* is set down
Among your darkest deeds.”

In ancient times, the theory that the mother was designated by nature as an instructor, was sometimes admitted and illustrated. The philosopher Aristippus, was the pupil of maternal precepts. Revered for his wisdom, he delighted in the appellation of Metrodidactos, the “ taught of his mother.”

“ We are indebted, says Quintilian, for the eloquence of the Gracchi, to their mother Cornelia,” who though qualified to give publick lectures in philosophy at Rome, did not forget to be the faithful teacher in private, of those, whom she so justly styled “ her jewels.” St. Jerome also bears similar testimony. “ The eloquence of the Gracchi, derived its perfection from the mother’s elegance and purity of language.”

Should heathen mothers be permitted to be more faithful in their duties, than those who are under bonds to the life-giving Gospel? "A good mother, says the eloquent L'Aime Martin, will seize upon her child's heart, as her special field of activity. To be capable of this, is the great end of female education. I have shewn that no universal agent of civilization exists, but through mothers. Nature has placed in their hands, our *infancy and youth*. I have been among the first to declare the necessity of making them, by improved education, capable of fulfilling their natural mission. The love of God and man, is the basis of this system. In proportion as it prevails, national enmities will disappear, prejudices become extinguished, civilization spread itself far and wide,—one great people cover the earth, and the reign of God be established. This is to be hastened, by the watchful care of mothers over their offspring, from the cradle upwards."

What an appeal to mothers! What an acknowledgement of the dignity of their office! The aid of the "weaker vessel," is now invoked by legislation and sages. It has been discovered that there are signs of disease in the body politic, which can be best allayed, by the subordination taught in families, and through her agency to whom is committed the "moulding

of the whole mass of mind in its first formation."

Woman is surely more deeply indebted to the government that protects her, than man, who bears within his own person, the elements of self-defence. But how shall her gratitude be best made an operative principle? Secluded as she wisely is, from any share in the administration of government, how shall her patriotism find legitimate exercise? The admixture of the female mind in the ferment of political ambition, would be neither safe if it were permitted, nor to be desired if it were safe. Nations who have encouraged it, have usually found their cabinet-councils perplexed by intrigue, or turbulent with contention. History has recorded instances, where the gentler sex have usurped the sceptre of the monarch, or invaded the province of the warrior. But we regard them either with amazement, as a planet rushing from its orbit, or with pity as the lost Pleiad, vanishing from its happy and brilliant sisterhood.

Still, patriotism is a virtue in our sex, and there is an office where it may be called into action, a privilege which the proudest peer might envy. It depends not on rank or wealth, the canvassings of party, or the fluctuations of the will of the people. Its throne is the heart, its revenue in Eternity. This office is that of ma-

ternal teacher. It is hers by hereditary right. Let her make it an inalienable possession. Nature invested her with it, when giving her the key of the infant soul, she bade her enter it through the affections. Her right to its first love, her intuitive discernment of its desires and impulses, her tact in detecting the minutest shades of temperament, her skill in forming the heart to her purpose, are proofs both of her prerogative, and of the Divine Source, whence it emanates.

It seems now to be conceded, that the vital interests of our country, may be aided by the zeal of mothers. Exposed as it is, to the influx of untutored foreigners, often unfit for its institutions, or adverse to their spirit, it seems to have been made a repository for the waste and refuse of other nations. To neutralize this mass, to rule its fermentations, to prevent it from becoming a lava-stream in the garden of liberty, and to purify it for those channels where the life-blood of the nation circulates, is a work of power and peril. The force of public opinion, or the terror of law, must hold in check these elements of danger, until Education can restore them to order and beauty. Insubordination is becoming a prominent feature in some of our principal cities. Obedience in families, respect to magistrates, and love of country, should therefore be inculcated with increased energy, by those who have earliest

access to the mind. A barrier to the torrent of corruption, and a guard over the strong holds of knowledge and of virtue, may be placed by the mother, as she watches over her cradled son. Let her come forth with vigour and vigilance, at the call of her country, not like Boadicea in her chariot, but like the mother of Washington, feeling that the first lesson to every incipient ruler should be, "*how to obey.*" The degree of her diligence in preparing her children to be good subjects of a just government, will be the true measure of her patriotism. While she labours to pour a pure and heavenly spirit into the hearts that open around her, she knows not but she may be appointed to rear some future statesman, for her nation's helm, or priest for the temple of Jehovah.

But a loftier ambition will inspire the christian mother, that of preparing "fellow citizens for the saints in glory." All other hopes should be held secondary, all other distinctions counted adventitious and fleeting. That she may be enabled to fulfil a mission so sacred, Heaven has given her priority and power, and that she may learn the nature of the soul which she is ordained to modify, has permitted her to be the *first* to look into it, as into the cup of some opening flower, fresh from the Forming Hand. The dignity of her office admits of no substitute. It is hers

to labour day and night, with patience, and in joyful hope. It is hers to lead forth the affections in healthful beauty, and prompt their heavenward aspirings. It is hers to foster tenderness of conscience, and so to regulate its balance that it swerve not amid the temptations of untried life. It is hers so to rivet principle, that it may retain its integrity, both "beneath the cloud, and under the sea." And as she labours for God, so she labours for her country, since whatever tends to prepare for citizenship in heaven, cannot fail to make good and loyal subjects of any just government on earth.

This then, is the patriotism of woman, not to thunder in senates, or to usurp dominion, or to seek the clarion-blast of fame, but faithfully to teach by precept and example, that wisdom, integrity and peace, which are the glory of a nation. Thus, in the wisdom of Providence, has she been prepared by the charm of life's fairest season, for the happiness of love; incited to rise above the trifling amusements and selfish pleasures which once engrossed her, that she might be elevated to the maternal dignity; cheered under its sleepless cares by a new affection; girded for its labours by the example of past ages; and adjured to fidelity in its most sacred duties, by the voice of God.

Admitting that it is the profession of our sex

to teach, we perceive the mother to be first in point of precedence, in degree of power, in the faculty of teaching, and in the department allotted. For in point of precedence, she is next to the Creator; in power over her pupil, limitless and without competitor; in faculty of teaching, endowed with the prerogative of a transforming love; while the glorious department allotted, is a newly quickened soul, and its immortal destiny.

Let her then not be regardless of the high privileges conferred upon her, or seek to stipulate for a life of indolence and ease, or feebly say that her individual exertion can be of little value. Let her not omit daily to cast into the treasury of the unfolding mind, her "two mites." The habits which she early impresses, though to her eye they seem but as the filmy line of the spider, scarcely clasping the spray, trembling at every breeze, may prove as links of tempered steel, binding a deathless being to eternal felicity or woe. A glorious aggregate will at last be formed by long perseverance in "line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, and there a little." As the termites patiently carry grains of sand, till their citadel astonishes the eye, as the coral insect toils beneath the waters, till reef joins reef, and islands spring up with golden fruitage and perennial verdure, so let the mother, "sitting down or walking by the way," in the

nursery, the parlour, even from the death-bed, labour to impress on her offspring that goodness, purity and piety, which shall render them acceptable to society, to their country, and to their God.

LETTER II.

INFLUENCE OF CHILDREN UPON PARENTS.

WE speak of educating our children. Do we know that our children also educate us?

“ How much tenderness, how much generosity, says a fine writer, springs into the father’s heart, from the cradle of his child. What is there so affecting to the noble and virtuous man, as that being which perpetually needs his help, and yet cannot call for it. Inarticulate sounds, or sounds which he receives half formed, he bows himself down to modulate, he lays them with infinite care and patience not only on the tender, attentive ear, but on the half-open lips, on the cheeks, as if they all were listeners.”

And if the sterner nature of man, is thus readily softened, how much more must the pliancy of woman be modified, through the melting affections of the mother.

Our authority over our children, passes away with their period of tutelage. But their influence over us, increases with time. The mother, associating her daughters with herself, becomes gradually guided by the judgment which she had

assisted to form. How common is the remark, "I have done this, or that, because my daughter thought it best." And the acquiescence, is still more common than the remark. The father, quotes the opinion of his sons with pride, and is perhaps governed by it, even when it differs from his own. This influence of the younger over the elder, naturally gains strength, as one comes forth with new vigour and energy, and the other, passing into the vale of years, learns to love repose.

It is important that the power which is eventually to modify us, should be under the guidance of correct principle. We select with care, a garment which is to protect us from cold, or which is expected to be in use for years. We are solicitous to obtain the best plan, when we erect a permanent habitation. We take pains that the chronometer which is to measure our hours, shall be accurate. Ought we not to be still more anxious, more faithful, more wary in fashioning the instrument, which is to measure our happiness, when the snows of the winter of life shall cover us? If we fail to instil correct principles into those, who are in the end to impress their own semblance upon us—if through their want of respectability, we are to be made less respectable, if even in their errors, we are to partake, as well as to be wounded, how great will be the loss!

“ How keen the pang, but keener far to feel,
We nurs'd the feather, that impell'd the steel.”

While the minds of children are in their waxen state, let parents then be most assiduous to impress on them such a likeness, as they should be willing themselves to bear. This injunction addresses itself more immediately to the mother, who has it in her power to make the earliest impressions, and is liable in her turn to be the most strongly impressed.

Observe how soon, and to what a degree, this influence begins to operate. Her first ministration for her infant, is to enter as it were, the valley of the shadow of death, and win its life at the peril of her own. How different must an affection thus founded, be from all others. As if to deepen its power, a season of languor ensues, when she is comparatively alone with her infant and with Him who gave it, cultivating an acquaintance with a new being, and through a new channel, with the greatest of all beings. Is she not also herself an image of His goodness, while she cherishes in her bosom, the young life that he laid there? A love, whose root is in death, whose fruit must be in Eternity, has taken possession of her. No wonder that its effects are obvious and great.

Has she been selfish? or rather has the disposition to become so, been nourished by the indul-

gence of affluence, or the adulation offered to beauty? How soon she sacrifices her own ease and convenience to that of her babe. She wakes at its slightest cry, and in its sicknesses forgets to take sleep.

"Night after night
She keepeth vigil, and when tardy morn
Breaks on her watching eyelids, and she fain
Would lay her down to rest, its weak complaining
O'ercomes her weariness."

Has she been indolent or vain? The physical care of her child helps to correct these faults. She patiently plies the needle, to adorn its person. She is pleased to hear the praises that were once lavished on herself, transferred to her new darling. Almost could she respond to the sentiment of Ossian, "Let the name of Morni, be forgotten among the people, if they will only say, behold the father of Gaul."

Has she been too much devoted to fashionable amusements? She learns to prize home-felt pleasures. She prefers her nursery to the lighted saloon, and the brilliant throng.

Has she been passionate? She restrains herself. How can she require the government of temper from her child, and yet set him no example? She learns to feel with Rousseau, that "the greatest respect is due to children." When her temper has been discomposed, she dreads

the gaze of that little, pure, wondering eye, perhaps even more than the reproof of conscience.

In the artificial intercourse of society, has she sometimes ceased to regard the true import of words? And does she not require truth of her child? As he advances toward moral agency, is she not more and more moved to exemplify that strict integrity which she demands of him?

Has she evaded the requisitions of religion? And is she willing that her child should be impious? Oh no!

Thus powerful are the influences exercised by the infant upon its mother, from the moment of its birth. If she yields to the transforming power, daily soliciting the Spirit of God to sanctify and sublimate the newly implanted affection, she may trust to reap a blessed harvest. But however imperfect may be her own spiritual improvement of the precious gift, she can scarcely fail to feel and acknowledge, that in this new existence, she has doubled her own capacities for enjoyment. No matter by what suffering, this joy has been obtained. The sleepless nights, the days of seclusion, the long heaviness that weighed down the buoyant spirit, the pang that has never yet been described, all are forgotten. "She remembereth no more her sorrow," saith that sacred pen, which knows to touch the soul's

inmost recesses. Nay, she would willingly have endured a thousand fold, for such a payment.

She has entered the temple of a purer happiness, and become the disciple of a higher school. She is led to be disinterested, she is induced to resign the restless search of pleasure, to feel her own insufficiency, to sit down under the shadow and shelter of Almighty wisdom. Are not these blessed results?

But, young mother, what do you hold in your arms? A machine of exquisite symmetry, the blue veins revealing the mysterious life-tide through an almost transparent surface, the waking thought speaking through the sparkling eye, or dissolving there in tears, such a form as the art of man has never equalled, and such a union of matter with mind, as his highest reason fails to comprehend. You embrace a being, whose developements may yet astonish you, who may perhaps sway the destiny of others, whose gatherings of knowledge you can neither foresee or limit, and whose chequered lot of sorrow or of joy, are known only to the Omnipotence which fashioned him. Still, if this were all, the office of a mother would lose its crowning dignity. But to be the guide of a spirit which can never die, to make the first indelible impressions on what may be a companion of seraphs, and live with an unbounded capacity for bliss or woe,

when these poor skies under which it was born, shall have vanished like a vision, this is the fearful honour which God hath entrusted to the "weaker vessel," and which would make us tremble amid our happiness, if we took not refuge in Him.

I have seen a young and beautiful mother, herself like a brilliant and graceful flower. Nothing could divide her from her infant. It was to her, as a twin-soul. She had loved society, for there she had been as an idol. But what was the fleeting delight of adulation, to the deep love that took possession of her whole being? She had loved her father's house. There, she was ever like a song-bird, the first to welcome the day, and the last to bless it. Now, she wreathed the same blossoms of the heart, around another home, and lulled her little nursling with the same inborn melodies.

It was sick. She hung over it. She watched it. She comforted it. She sat whole nights with it in her arms. It was to her, like the beloved of the King of Israel, "feeding among the lillies." Under the pressure of this care, there was in her eye, a deep and holy beauty, which never gleamed there, when she was radiant in the dance, or in the halls of fashion, the cynosure. She had been taught to love God, and his worship, from her youth up; but when health

again glowed in the face of her babe, there came from her lip, such a prayer of flowing praise, as it had never before breathed.

And when in her beautiful infant, there were the first developements of character, and of those preferences and aversions which leave room to doubt whether they are from simplicity or perverseness, and whether they should be repressed or pitied, and how the harp might be so tuned as not to injure its tender and intricate harmony, there burst from her soul a supplication more earnest, more self abandoning, more prevailing, than she had ever before poured into the ear of the majesty of heaven.

So the feeble hand of the babe that she nourished, led her through more profound depths of humility, to higher aspirations of faith. And I felt that the affection, to whose hallowed influence she had so yielded, was guiding her to a higher seat among the "just made perfect."

LETTER III.

INFANCY.

INTERCOURSE with infancy, is improving, as well as delightful. It subdues pride, and deepens piety. Obdurate natures are softened by its sweet smile, and the picture of its sleeping innocence. Its entire helplessness, its perfect trust, dissolve the soul. The bold wanderer in the world's crooked ways, gazes, and recalls the time when he was himself unstained. Tender remembrances take him captive, and ere he is aware, the tear trickles down his cheeks, in fond regret, perhaps, in healthful penitence.

The construction of the infant's frame ; the little beating heart, sending life-blood through its thousand thread-like channels ; the lungs, fastening with delight, on the gift of the pure air ; the countless absorbents, busied in their invisible work-shops ; the net-work of nerves, minute as the filaments of thought, quickening with sensation ; the tender brain, beginning its mysterious agency ; the silken fringe of the eyes, opening wider as some brilliant colour strikes the dazzled retina ; the slender fingers unfolding themselves,

as some new sound winds its way through the ear's untrodden labyrinth, giving its key-tone to the wondering mind ; all the mystery and beauty of this miniature temple, where the ethereal spirit is a lodger, lead the observer to an Almighty Architect, and constrain him to adore.

But especially is the *care* of infancy salutary to the character. It inspires the gentle, pitying and hallowed affections. Mothers, the blessing of this ministry is ours. Let us study night and day, the science that promotes the welfare of our infant.

We cannot but be aware, that our duty to it begins before its birth. Every irritable feeling should then be restrained, and the overflowing joy and hope of our religion, be our daily aliment. Exercise, among the beautiful works of nature, the infusion of social feeling, and contemplation of the most cheering subjects, should be cherished by her, who has the glorious hope of introducing into this world, a being never to die ; who already a part of herself, adds warmth and frequency to her prayers, and whom "having not seen, she loves."

The first three months of infancy, should be a season of quietness. The unfolding organs require the nursing of silence and of love. The delicate system, like the mimosa, shrinks from every rude touch. Violent motions, are uncon-

genial to the new-born. Loud, sharp sounds, and even glaring colours, should be excluded from the nursery. The visual and auditory nerves, those princely ambassadors to the mind, are still in embryo. Inure them tenderly and gradually, to their respective functions.

The first months of infancy are a spot of brightness to a faithful and affectionate mother; a dream of bliss, from which she wakes to more complicated duties; a payment for past suffering, a preparation for future toil. I heard a lady, who had brought up a large family, say, it was the "only period of a mother's perfect enjoyment." At its expiration, comes dentition, with a host of physical ills. The character begins to develope, and sometimes to take that tinge, which occasional pain of body, or fretfulness of temper impart. The alphabet of existence is learned. We can perceive that its combinations are not always in harmony. The little being takes hold upon this life of trial. Soon, its ignorance must be dispelled, its perceptions guided, its waywardness quelled, its passions held in check, by one, who often feels herself too infirm for the mighty task.

Yet were I to define the climax of happiness, which a mother enjoys with her infant, I should by no means limit it to the first three months. The whole season while it is deriving nutriment

from her, is one of peculiar, inexpressible felicity. She has it in her power so immediately to hush its moanings, to sooth its sorrows, to alleviate its sicknesses, that she is to it, as a tutelary spirit.

Dear friends, be not anxious to abridge this halcyon period. Do not willingly deprive yourselves of any portion of the highest pleasure, of which woman's nature is capable. Devote yourselves to the work. Have nothing to do with the fashionable evening party, the crowded hall, the changes of dress that put health in jeopardy. Be temperate in all things. Receive no substance into the stomach, that disorders it; no stimulant that affects the head; indulge no agitating passions. They change the aliment of your child. They introduce poison into its veins, or kindle fever in its blood. Experienced medical men will assure you, that its constitution through life, is modified by the nursing of the first year. One of the most illustrious living physicians in Paris, while testing the pathology of disease, in the thronged wards of the hospitals in that metropolis, always questions the new patient, "were you nursed at the breast of your mother? and how long?"

I would say to every mother, study the constitution of your babe. If it have any morbid tendencies, either heritable, or accidental, bear

steadily upon them, with the regimen best adapted to their cure. Let it be your aim to use as little medicine as possible, and not causelessly to trouble a physician, for those trifling ills which your own patience or firmness might obviate. Suffer me to repeat it, guard your own health, and serenity of spirit, for the child is still a part of yourself, as the blossom of the plant, from whose root it gathers sustenance. Breathe over it the atmosphere of happy and benevolent affections. Surely, you cannot fail to thank your Heavenly Father, for this unspeakable gift," and as you lull it to that sleep which knows no dream of sorrow, lift up the prayer, "let this soul so lately divided from mine, live before thee, Oh God."

As this fragment of your self, advances toward the properties of a sentient being, you will naturally vary your mode of treatment. The expanding muscles require more exercise. The perceptions shoot forth, like timid tendrils under the vine-leaf. It loves to inhale the fresh air, to be carried out beneath the shade of green trees in summer. It regards the brilliant petals of flowers, and the perfume of the rose. It listens to the shrill note of the bird, and looks with wonder upon the leaping, tuneful brook. It is fitting that it should find a place among the beauties and melodies of nature, itself more

beautiful than they. If your situation allows you thus to give it exercise, in fine weather, avail yourself of the privilege. If not, furnish it the best mode of recreation in the open air, which is in your power. But avoid all undue excitement. Its nerves are still as a harp imperfectly strung, and liable to dissonance.

During this first sacred year, trust not your treasure too much to the charge of hirelings. Have it under your superintendence, both night and day. When necessarily engaged in other employments, let it hear your cheering, protecting tone. Keep it ever within the sensible atmosphere of maternal tenderness. Its little heart will soon reach out the slender radicles of love and trust. Nourish them with smiles and caresses, the "small dew upon the tender grass." When it learns to distinguish you, by stretching its arms for your embrace, when on its little tottering feet it essays to run towards you, above all, when the first effort of its untaught tongue, is to form your name, mother, there is neither speech nor language, by which to express your joy! No, no, the poverty of words, will never be so unwise as to attempt it.

Do you ask, when shall we begin to teach our children religion? As soon as you see them. As soon as they are laid upon your breast. As soon as you feel the pure breath issuing from that

wondrous tissue of air-vessels which God has wreathed around the heart.

The religion of a new-born babe, is the prayer of its mother. Keep this sacred flame burning for it, in the shrine of the soul, until it is able to light its own feeble lamp, and fill its new censer, with praise.

As the infant advances in strength, its religion should be love. Teach it love, by your own accents, your countenance, your whole department. Labour to fashion its habits and temper, after this hallowed model. Let the first lessons of earth, breathe the spirit of heaven.

When the high gifts of speech and thought are given it, point it to Him who caused the sun to shine, and the plant to grow, and the chirping bird to be joyful in its nest. Teach it, that it is loved of this Great Being, that it may love Him in return. Mingle the majesty of His goodness, with the elements of its thought. You will be surprised to see how soon the lisping lip may learn communion, with the Father of Mercies.

“ Teach me to pray, instruct me in religion !” said a young prince to his tutor. “ You are not yet old enough.” “ Ah, yes ! I have been in the burying ground. I have measured the graves. There are some there, which are shorter than I.”

Mother, if there is, in your church-yard, one grave shorter than your child, hasten to instruct him in religion.

LETTER IV.

FIRST LESSONS.

WATCH for the time when your little one first exhibits decided preferences, and aversions. The next letter in the alphabet, is obedience. It is its first step towards religion. The fear of God, must be taught by the parent, standing for a time, in the place of God.

Establish your will, as the law. Do it early, for docility is impaired by delay. It is the truest love, to save the little stranger in this labyrinth of life, all those conflicts of feeling, which must continue, as long as it remains doubtful who is to be its guide. As the root and germ of piety, as a preparation for submission to the Eternal Father, as the subduing process, which is to lead it in calmness through the storms and surges of time, teach obedience.

It is a simple precept in philosophy, that obedience should be the most entire and unconditional, where reason is the weakest. Its requisitions should be enforced, in proportion to the want of intelligence in the subject. The parent, is emphatically, a light to those who sit in darkness.

The transition from the dreamy existence of infancy, to the earliest activity of childhood, is a period when parental authority is eminently needful, to repress evil, and to preserve happiness. But it must have been established *before*, in order to be in readiness *then*. Without this rudder, the little voyager is liable to be thrown among the eddies of its own passions, and wrecked like the bark-canoe.

You will not suppose me, my dear friends, the advocate of austerity. As the substitution of your wisdom, in the place of the wayward impulses of your child, is the truest kindness, so it is a feature of that kindness, to commence it when it may be done with the greatest ease. Gentleness, combined with firmness, will teach it to your infant. Wait a few months, and perhaps, it may not be so. Obedience, to the mind in its waxen state, is like the silken thread, by which the plant is drawn toward its prop ; enforced too late, it is like the lasso, with which the wild horse is enchain'd, requiring dexterity to throw, and severity to manage.

Deaf and dumb children, or those whose intellect is weak, it is peculiarly cruel, not to subjugate. With them, the will of the parent, must longer, and more entirely operate. As reason develops, and the habits become regulated, and the affections take their right place, parental au-

thority naturally relaxes its vigilance. It loosens, and falls off, like the thorny sheath of the chesnut, when the kernel ripens. But the husk of the chesnut is opened by the frost, and the sway of the parent yields to the sharper lessons of the world; and of this teaching, the young probationer is not always able to say that

“ When most severe and mustering all its wrath,
‘Tis but the graver countenance of love.”

With many of our most illustrious characters, the obedience of earlier years was strongly enforced. We know it was so, in the case of Washington. Other examples might be easily adduced. Those who have most wisely ruled others, have usually tested, by their own experience, the nature of subordination, at its proper season. Fabius Maximus, whose invincible wisdom, tamed the fierce spirits of Rome, was so distinguished by submission to his superiors, as to be derided by the insubordinate, and called in his boyhood, “the little sheep.”

Let the next lesson to your infant pupil, be kindness to all around. The rudiments are best taught by the treatment of animals. If it seizes a kitten by the back, or pulls its hair, show immediately by your own example, how it may be held properly, and soothed into confidence. Draw back the little hand, lifted to strike the dog.

Perhaps it may not understand that it thus inflicts pain. But be strenuous in confirming an opposite habit. Do not permit it to kill flies, or to trouble harmless insects. Check the first bud-dings of those Domitian tastes. Instruct it that the gift of life, to the poor beetle, or the crawling worm, is from the Great Father above, and not to be lightly trodden out. A little boy, who early discovered propensities to cruelty, was so thoroughly weaned from them, by his mother, that when attending to infantine lessons in Natural History, long before he was able to read, and hearing of a bird that was fond of catching flies, he lisped, with a kind of horror upon his baby-face, "Oh ! kill flies ! will God forgive it ?"

Another boy, was observed never to deviate in his kind treatment of dogs. And he remembered that with a heaving breast, and suffused eye, he had listened, when almost an infant, to the following simple story.

"There was once a good dog. His master was always kind to him. When he called him, he came ; when he went from home, he followed him ; when he sat by the fire, he slept at his feet. But his master grew sick, and died. The dog watched where they buried him. He went and stretched himself out on the grave. The people from the house, came to coax him home again. They said, "come ! come ! poor fellow ! we will

feed you ; we will be kind to you." He went with them, but he would not stay. He would not lay down by the fire, and sleep where he used to do. For his master was not there. He took only a little food, and hurried back to the grave. There he watched night and day. When he heard a footstep among the tombs, he started up, and gazed earnestly around. But when he saw it was not his dear master, he laid his head on the turf again, and moaned. The storms beat on him, and the cold snows, but he would not leave the grave. In the dark midnight, it was sad to hear his voice among the dead, calling for his master. But his barking grew fainter and fainter. Pitying children brought him meat and bread. He was too weak to eat, and he ceased to lick their hands. He grew thin, and pined away. At last he could no longer rise up on his feet ; and so he died, calling for his beloved master."

How soon such precepts of kindness, in the tender tones of a mother, may incorporate themselves with the nature of an infant, we know not. But we do know that those baleful dispositions, which desolate human happiness, are often early developed. It was Benedict Arnold, the traitor, who in his boyhood loved to destroy insects, to mutilate toads, to steal the eggs of the mourning bird, and torture quiet, domestic animals, who

eventually laid waste the shrinking, domestic charities, and would have drained the life-blood of his endangered country.

Let your third lesson be truth. Grant the little learner all the aid in your power, for the growth of this cardinal virtue. Do not be severe for little faults, and especially for accidents. Do not set fear in array against truth, in the breast of your child. It is stronger, and will prevail; for its moral code is yet unsettled, but the passions, like Minerva, have sprung armed into life. As your child becomes acquainted with the import of words, accustom it to speak to you freely of its faults. Explain to it, that it is an erring being, that your discipline is intended to make it better, more acceptable to God, happier when it grows up, and in the life to come. Assure it, that you should be wanting in your duty, if you failed to reform its errors, and therefore exhort it, to tell you frankly when it has erred, as the physician requires of the sick man, a full account of his symptoms, ere he proportions the remedy. A child, thus instructed, was often led by the nurse, to his mother's room, when he had offended, and left there, without any accusation, save his own lisping voice; and it was invariably found on comparing his evidence with the facts, that he had preserved the beauty of truth inviolate. This result would be more

frequently seen, if we did not terrify the infant delinquents. They are often puzzled with the meaning of words, when questions are rapidly addressed to them; even their reliance on our justice forsakes them, if they discern the lineaments of anger; and self-preservation, the first law of nature, coming into action, overthrows their infirm integrity.

“*My goodness grows weak,*” said a boy, of five years old, running into his mother’s arms: “*help me to be good.*” Doubtless we might longer continue as guardian angels to our children, if we cultivated in them habits of perfect confidence, and forebore to terrify them for trivial delinquencies.

As an important ally of truth, we should protect their simplicity. The whole structure of society is so artificial, that to a child it is a perpetual mystery. A little boy when taking his leave at night, to go to bed, said to one of the circle, whom he kissed, “you have not got a pretty face.” Another, who sat near, expressed surprise at the remark, and to him also he said, “I do not like your face, neither.” His mother inquired, “whose face do you like?” Pointing to the handsomest of the group, he replied, “hers, my grown-up sister’s face.” Now, what at first view seemed rudeness, was simply an expression of the perception of beauty. He wished

to impart the new pleasure that had entered into his infant heart, and he chose at first to give the proposition a negative form. In a mature, and educated person, this would have been a breach of politeness. But the little one, uttered only the truth. He had not learned the adage that "truth is not to be spoken at all times." Nor could he, until his judgment had acquired strength, or rather until he had become hackneyed in the world's policy. The mother, who was prepared to reprove him, saw that he ought not to be reproved. Why should we compel our children to adopt the conventional forms of society, when they subvert simplicity? Why commence a warfare against Nature, almost as soon as she develops herself? Why help to root out that singleness of heart, which is the most winning and remarkable flower in the garden of life? We tell our young children that they must be polite. We force them to kiss strangers, and to say what they do not feel, and to repress what they do feel, because it is polite. Again, we tell them, in graver teachings, that they must speak the truth. We throw their little minds into a ferment of doubt, to discover what is truth, and what is politeness, and to draw that line, which no casuist has yet, ever drawn. And ere we are aware, the fresh integrity of the soul escapes. We rebuke, we punish them for insincerity.

Are not the usages of refined society, too much based upon it. Why then force infancy into them before its time? Its social feelings develope but slowly; why hasten to conform them to those complex customs, and hollow courtesies which are but too often modifications of falsehood. Rather, guard its simplicity, and plant deep in the seclusion of the nursery, that root of truth, whose fruits are for the kingdom of heaven.

In teaching the three primary lessons of obedience, kindness, and truth, there are others, which naturally interweave themselves, and claim importance in the moral code of infancy. A mother's vigilant eye, will not overlook them, while laying the foundation for a future superstructure of virtue. Among them, she will surely be assiduous to foster delicacy. This seems to me, to be natural to young children, as far as I have been acquainted with them, unless contaminated by evil example. They shrink from exposure of their persons. Let this feeling be respected where it exists, and implanted, where it does not. "I am tired under my apron," said a little boy, choosing of his own accord, the most delicate manner of revealing a common pain. Permit them to hear neither stories or words, which create impure associations, any more than you would such as are tinctured with profanity. For though they may repeat them, without know-

ledge of their import, still it is dangerous to load memory with defilement, trusting that it will always remain inert. Perhaps, these cautions may be deemed superfluous. Yet as long as purity of thought and character, are essential to excellence, even the slightest fence around their first germinations, is worthy of being strengthened.

I am confident that mothers are not sufficiently careful, with regard to the conversation of domestics, or other uneducated persons, who in their absence, may undertake to amuse their children. "If the little girl cries, while I am gone," said a mother to an Irish domestic, recently hired, "tell her a story, and she will be quiet." Ah! and what kind of a story? You will not be there to hear it. But the tender intellect, already sufficiently advanced to be soothed with stories, may imbibe foolish, or vulgar, or frightful images, and take their colouring, like soft wool, sinking in Tyrian purple. "*Tell her a story!*" Why that is the very aliment which her opening mind seizes with the greatest eagerness. And you are ignorant whether that aliment may not be mingled with corruption. It was a wise man, who said, he cared not who made the laws of a nation, if he might only have the making of their songs. With greater truth, may it be said of unfolding infancy; any one who chooses may

give it grave lessons, but look out for its story-tellers. Thus it is, that unfortunate babes are terrified, and made to dread a dark room, or a lonely chamber, until the sleep that should solace them, is but a communion with nameless monsters, and they are frightened out of their sweet birthright, the fearlessness of innocence.

Let mothers mingle their teachings, with smiles, and the dialect of love. -It is surprising how soon an infant learns to read the countenance, how it deciphers the charm of a cheerful spirit, how it longs to be loved. "Do you love me well?" the musician Mozart, asked in his infancy, of all the servants of his father, as one after the other, they passed him, in their various employments. And if any among them, to tease him, answered "no," he covered his baby face, and wept.

A little deaf and dumb boy, selected for his favourite, among many sisters, her who possessed the most beaming and radiant countenance. In the eloquent idiom of that peculiar class of persons, he said, "you are the goddess of laughings, of greatest smiles, of smallest smiles ; so, I love you, best of all."

I have seldom been more painfully struck, than with the woe-worn countenance of a silent babe, by the side of its miserable mother, in the State's-prison. No conversation was allowed, among

the convicts. Smiles, are not the dialect of guilt. So, there it sat, or lay, for it was too young to walk, with its wishful eyes ever turned on her who had borne it in sin, and who had no heart to cheer it, for she was herself wretched. No loving word, aided it to shape its discordant articulations. The baleful breath of guilt, seared its young perceptions, like a lava-stream. I longed to take it from the bosom of crime, and from those haggard and hateful brows, which were stamping upon it, their own lineaments. And I never before so deeply realized the importance, that the little pilgrim of immortality, should be taken at the very gate of life, into an atmosphere of innocence, and the cradle of love.

LETTER V.

MATERNAL LOVE.

To love children, is the dictate of our nature. Apart from the promptings of kindred blood, it is a spontaneous tribute to their helplessness, their innocence, or their beauty. The total absence of this love, induces a suspicion that the heart is not right. "Beware, said Lavater, of him who hates the laugh of a child." "I love God, and every little child," was the simple, yet sublime sentiment of Richter.

The man of the world, pauses in his absorbing career, and claps his hands, to gain an infant's smile. The victim of vice, gazes wishfully on the pure, open forehead of childhood, and retraces those blissful years that were free from guile. The man of piety loves that docility and singleness of heart, which drew from his Saviour's lips, the blessed words, "of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Elliot, the apostle of the Indians, amid his laborious ministry, and rude companionship, shewed in all places, the most marked attention to young children. In extreme age, when his

head was white as the Alpine snows, he felt his heart warm at their approach. Many a pastor, whom he had assisted to consecrate, bore witness to the pathos of his appeal, the solemnity of his intonation, when he inquired, “ Brother, lovest thou our Lord Jesus Christ? *Then feed these lambs.*”

The love of children, in man is a virtue: in woman, an element of nature. It is a feature of her constitution, a proof of His wisdom, who having entrusted to her the burden of the early nurture of a whole race, gives that sustaining power which produces harmony, between her dispositions, and her allotted tasks.

To love children, is a graceful lineament, in the character of young ladies. Anxious as they usually are to acquire the art of pleasing, they are not always aware what an attraction it imparts to their manners. It heightens the influence of beauty, and often produces a strong effect, where beauty is wanting.

“ Love children,” said Madame de Maintenon, in her advice to the young dauphiness; whether for a prince or a peasant, it is the most amiable accomplishment.” It was this very trait in her own character, that won the heart of Louis the Great. When she was governess of his children, and past the bloom of life, he surprised her one morning, in the royal nursery, sustaining with

one arm, the oldest son, then feeble from the effects of a fever, rocking with the other hand a cradle, in which lay the infant princess, while on her lap reposed the sleeping infant. His tenderness as a father, and his susceptibility as a man, accorded that deep admiration which would have been denied to the splendour of dress, the parade of rank, or the blaze of beauty.

But how feeble are all the varieties of love, which childhood elicits, compared to that which exists in a mother's breast. Examine, I pray you, its unique nature, by contrast and comparison. We are wont to place our affections, where our virtues are appreciated, or to fix our reliance where some benefit may be conferred. But maternal love, is founded on utter helplessness. A wailing cry, a foot too feeble to bear the burden of the body, an eye unable to distinguish the friend who feeds it, a mind more obtuse than the new-born lamb, which discerns its mother amid the flock, or the duckling that hastens from its shell to the stream, are among the elements of which it is compounded.

It is able also to subsist without aliment. Other love requires the interchange of words or smiles, some beauty, or capability, or moral fitness, either existing, or supposed to exist. It is wont, as it advances in ardour, to exact a vow of preference, above all the world beside, and if need

be, to guard this its Magna Charta, with the sting of reproach, or the fang of jealousy. It is scarcely proof against long absence, without frequent tokens of remembrance, and its most passionate stage of existence, may be checked by caprice.

But I have seen a mother's love, endure every test unharmed, and come forth from the refiner's furnace, purged from that dross of selfishness, which the heart is wont to find among its purest gold. A widow expended on her only son, all the fullness of her affection, and the little gains of her industry. She denied herself every superfluity, that he might receive the benefits of education, and the indulgences that boyhood covets. She sat silently by her small fire, and lighted her single candle, and regarded him with intense delight, as he amused himself with his books, or sought out the lessons for the following day. The expenses of his school were discharged by the labour of her hands, and glad and proud was she to bestow on him, privileges, which her own youth had never been permitted to share. She believed him to be diligently acquiring the knowledge which she respected, but was unable to comprehend. His teachers, and his idle companions, knew otherwise. He indeed, learned to astonish his simple and admiring parent, with high-sounding epithets, and technical terms, and

to despise her for not understanding them. When she saw him discontented, at comparing his situation with that of others, who were above him in rank, she denied herself almost bread, that she might add a luxury for his table, or a garment to his wardrobe.

She erred in judgment, and he in conduct ; but her changeless love surmounted all. Still, there was little reciprocity, and every year diminished that little, in his cold and selfish heart. He returned no caress ; his manners assumed a cast of defiance. She strove not to perceive the alteration, or sadly solaced herself with the reflection, that "it was the nature of boys."

He grew boisterous and disobedient. His returns to their humble cottage became irregular. She sat up late for him, and when she heard his approaching footstep, forgot her weariness, and welcomed him kindly. But he might have seen reproach written on the paleness of her loving brow, if he would have read its language. During those long and lonely evenings, she sometimes wept as she remembered him in his early years, when he was so gentle, and to her eye so beautiful. "But this is the way of young men," said her lame philosophy. So, she armed herself to bear.

At length, it was evident that darker vices were making him their victim. The habit of in-

temperance could no longer be concealed, even from a love that blinded itself. The widowed mother remonstrated with unwonted energy. She was answered in the dialect of insolence and brutality.

He disappeared from her cottage. What she dreaded, had come upon her. In his anger, he had gone to sea. And now, every night, when the tempest howled, and the wind was high, she lay sleepless, thinking of him. She saw him, in her imagination, climbing the slippery shrouds, or doing the bidding of rough, unfeeling men. Again, she fancied that he was sick and suffering, with none to watch over him, or have patience with his waywardness, and her head which silver hairs began to sprinkle, gushed forth, as if it were a fountain of waters.

But hope of his return, began to cheer her. When the new moon looked with its slender crescent in at her window, she said "I think my boy will be here, ere that moon is old." And when it waned and went away, she sighed and said "my boy will remember me."

Years fled, and there was no letter, no recognition. Sometimes she gathered tidings from a comrade, that he was on some far sea, or in some foreign land. But no message for his mother. When he touched at some port in his native country, it was not to seek her cottage, but to

spend his wages in revelry, and re-embark on a new voyage.

Weary years, and no letter. Yet she had abridged her comforts, that he might be taught to write, and she used to exhibit his penmanship with such pride. But she dismissed the reproachful thought. "*It was the way with sailors.*"

Amid all these years of neglect and cruelty, the mother's love lived on. When Hope refused it nourishment, it asked food of Memory. It was satisfied with the crumbs from a table which must never be spread again. Memory brought the broken bread which she had gathered into her basket, when the feast of innocence was over, and Love received it as a mendicant, and fed upon it and gave thanks. She fed upon the cradle-smile, upon the first caress of infancy, upon the loving years of childhood, when putting his cheek to hers, he slumbered the live-long night, or when teaching him to walk, he tottered with outstretched arms to her bosom, as a new-fledg'd bird to its nest.

But Religion found this lonely widow, and communed with her at deep midnight, while the storm was raging without. It told her of a "name better than of sons or of daughters," and she was comforted. It bade her resign herself to the will of her Father in Heaven, and she found peace.

It was a cold evening in winter, and the snow lay deep upon the earth. The widow sat alone by her little fire-side. The marks of early age had settled upon her. There was meekness on her brow, and in her hand a book from whence that meekness came.

A heavy knock shook her door, and ere she could open it, a man entered. He moved with pain, like one crippled, and his red and downcast visage was partially concealed by a torn hat. Among those who had been familiar with his youthful countenance, only one save the Being who made him, could have recognized him, through his disguise and misery. The mother looking deep into his eye, saw a faint tinge of that fair blue, which had charmed her, when it unclosed from the cradle-dream.

“My son! My son!”

Had the prodigal returned by a late repentance, to atone for years of ingratitude and sin? I will not speak of the revels that shook the peaceful roof of his widowed parent, or of the profanity that disturbed her repose. The remainder of his history is brief. The effects of vice had debilitated his constitution, and once, as he was apparently recovering from a long paroxysm of intemperance, apoplexy struck his heated brain, and he lay a bloated and hideous carcase.

The poor mother faded away and followed him. She had watched over him, with a meek, nursing patience, to the last. Her love had never turned away from him, through years of neglect, brutality, and revolting wickedness. "Bearing all things, believing all things, hoping all things, enduring all things," was its motto.

Is not the same love in the hearts of us all, who are mothers? And wherefore has it been placed there, that deathless love? Sisters, why is it placed there?

To expend itself in the physical care of our children, in the indulgence of their appetites? A nurse, or a servant might do this, for money. To adorn their persons? That is the milliner's province. To secure showy accomplishments? A fashionable teacher will do this better. To spend itself on aught that earth can bestow? I pray you not thus to degrade its essence or its mission.

The wisdom that never errs, attempers means to ends. It proportions the strongest affections to the greatest needs. It arms the timid, domestic bird, with an eagle's courage, when its young are to be defended. It has implanted in our bosoms, a love, next in patience to that of a Redeemer, that we may perform the ministry of an angel, and help to people with angels, the court of Heaven.

LETTER VI.

HABIT.

WE all acknowledge the strength of habit. Its power increases with time. In youth, it may seem to us, like the filmy line of the spider ; in age, like the fly caught in its toils, we struggle in vain. “ Habit, if not resisted, says St. Augustine, becomes necessity.”

Can we be too attentive to the habits that our children form ? too assiduous that the virtues which we cherish in them, should have a deep root in correct principle ? We wish them to become benevolent. The proper basis of their benevolence, is sympathetic feeling, a desire for the comfort and improvement of others, in conformity to the command and example of their Heavenly Father.

That fine sentiment of Terence, “ I am a man, and therefore I feel for all mankind,” might be uttered with additional emphasis by our sex, whose sympathies should be ever kept in action, by our own infirmities, dependences, and sorrows. Let us therefore, in our domestic teachings, do all in our power to extirpate selfishness, especially

give it grave lessons, but look out for its story-tellers. Thus it is, that unfortunate babes are terrified, and made to dread a dark room, or a lonely chamber, until the sleep that should solace them, is but a communion with nameless monsters, and they are frightened out of their sweet birthright, the fearlessness of innocence.

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The love of children, in man is a virtue: in woman, an element of nature. It is a feature of her constitution, a proof of His wisdom, who having entrusted to her the burden of the early nurture of a whole race, gives that sustaining power which produces harmony, between her dispositions, and her allotted tasks.

To love children, is a graceful lineament, in the character of young ladies. Anxious as they usually are to acquire the art of pleasing, they are not always aware what an attraction it imparts to their manners. It heightens the influence of beauty, and often produces a strong effect, where beauty is wanting.

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one arm, the oldest son, then feeble from the effects of a fever, rocking with the other hand a cradle, in which lay the infant princess, while on her lap reposed the sleeping infant. His tenderness as a father, and his susceptibility as a man, accorded that deep admiration which would have been denied to the splendour of dress, the parade of rank, or the blaze of beauty.

But how feeble are all the varieties of love, which childhood elicits, compared to that which exists in a mother's breast. Examine, I pray you, its unique nature, by contrast and comparison. We are wont to place our affections, where our virtues are appreciated, or to fix our reliance where some benefit may be conferred. But maternal love, is founded on utter helplessness. A wailing cry, a foot too feeble to bear the burden of the body, an eye unable to distinguish the friend who feeds it, a mind more obtuse than the new-born lamb, which discerns its mother amid the flock, or the duckling that hastens from its shell to the stream, are among the elements of which it is compounded.

It is able also to subsist without aliment. Other love requires the interchange of words or smiles, some beauty, or capability, or moral fitness, either existing, or supposed to exist. It is wont, as it advances in ardour, to exact a vow of preference, above all the world beside, and if need

be, to guard this its Magna Charta, with the sting of reproach, or the fang of jealousy. It is scarcely proof against long absence, without frequent tokens of remembrance, and its most passionate stage of existence, may be checked by caprice.

But I have seen a mother's love, endure every test unharmed, and come forth from the refiner's furnace, purged from that dross of selfishness, which the heart is wont to find among its purest gold. A widow expended on her only son, all the fullness of her affection, and the little gains of her industry. She denied herself every superfluity, that he might receive the benefits of education, and the indulgences that boyhood covets. She sat silently by her small fire, and lighted her single candle, and regarded him with intense delight, as he amused himself with his books, or sought out the lessons for the following day. The expenses of his school were discharged by the labour of her hands, and glad and proud was she to bestow on him, privileges, which her own youth had never been permitted to share. She believed him to be diligently acquiring the knowledge which she respected, but was unable to comprehend. His teachers, and his idle companions, knew otherwise. He indeed, learned to astonish his simple and admiring parent, with high-sounding epithets, and technical terms, and

to despise her for not understanding them. When she saw him discontented, at comparing his situation with that of others, who were above him in rank, she denied herself almost bread, that she might add a luxury for his table, or a garment to his wardrobe.

She erred in judgment, and he in conduct ; but her changeless love surmounted all. Still, there was little reciprocity, and every year diminished that little, in his cold and selfish heart. He returned no caress ; his manners assumed a cast of defiance. She strove not to perceive the alteration, or sadly solaced herself with the reflection, that "it was the nature of boys."

He grew boisterous and disobedient. His returns to their humble cottage became irregular. She sat up late for him, and when she heard his approaching footstep, forgot her weariness, and welcomed him kindly. But he might have seen reproach written on the paleness of her loving brow, if he would have read its language. During those long and lonely evenings, she sometimes wept as she remembered him in his early years, when he was so gentle, and to her eye so beautiful. "But this is the way of young men," said her lame philosophy. So, she armed herself to bear.

At length, it was evident that darker vices were making him their victim. The habit of in-

temperance could no longer be concealed, even from a love that blinded itself. The widowed mother remonstrated with unwonted energy. She was answered in the dialect of insolence and brutality.

He disappeared from her cottage. What she dreaded, had come upon her. In his anger, he had gone to sea. And now, every night, when the tempest howled, and the wind was high, she lay sleepless, thinking of him. She saw him, in her imagination, climbing the slippery shrouds, or doing the bidding of rough, unfeeling men. Again, she fancied that he was sick and suffering, with none to watch over him, or have patience with his waywardness, and her head which silver hairs began to sprinkle, gushed forth, as if it were a fountain of waters.

But hope of his return, began to cheer her. When the new moon looked with its slender crescent in at her window, she said "I think my boy will be here, ere that moon is old." And when it waned and went away, she sighed and said "my boy will remember me."

Years fled, and there was no letter, no recognition. Sometimes she gathered tidings from a comrade, that he was on some far sea, or in some foreign land. But no message for his mother. When he touched at some port in his native country, it was not to seek her cottage, but to

spend his wages in revelry, and re-embark on a new voyage.

Weary years, and no letter. Yet she had abridged her comforts, that he might be taught to write, and she used to exhibit his penmanship with such pride. But she dismissed the reproachful thought. "*It was the way with sailors.*"

Amid all these years of neglect and cruelty, the mother's love lived on. When Hope refused it nourishment, it asked food of Memory. It was satisfied with the crumbs from a table which must never be spread again. Memory brought the broken bread which she had gathered into her basket, when the feast of innocence was over, and Love received it as a mendicant, and fed upon it and gave thanks. She fed upon the cradle-smile, upon the first caress of infancy, upon the loving years of childhood, when putting his cheek to hers, he slumbered the live-long night, or when teaching him to walk, he tottered with outstretched arms to her bosom, as a new-fledg'd bird to its nest.

But Religion found this lonely widow, and communed with her at deep midnight, while the storm was raging without. It told her of a "name better than of sons or of daughters," and she was comforted. It bade her resign herself to the will of her Father in Heaven, and she found peace.

the convicts. Smiles, are not the dialect of guilt. So, there it sat, or lay, for it was too young to walk, with its wishful eyes ever turned on her who had borne it in sin, and who had no heart to cheer it, for she was herself wretched. No loving word, aided it to shape its discordant articulations. The baleful breath of guilt, seared its young perceptions, like a lava-stream. I longed to take it from the bosom of crime, and from those haggard and hateful brows, which were stamping upon it, their own lineaments. And I never before so deeply realized the importance, that the little pilgrim of immortality, should be taken at the very gate of life, into an atmosphere of innocence, and the cradle of love.

LETTER V.

MATERNAL LOVE.

To love children, is the dictate of our nature. Apart from the promptings of kindred blood, it is a spontaneous tribute to their helplessness, their innocence, or their beauty. The total absence of this love, induces a suspicion that the heart is not right. "Beware, said Lavater, of him who hates the laugh of a child." "I love God, and every little child," was the simple, yet sublime sentiment of Richter.

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from the breasts of our daughters. Selfishness is not to be endured in woman. In the catalogue of her faults, we do not expect to have forbearance with that. It wars with the nature of her duties, and subverts her happiness. It will be found on a comparative analysis of character, that those females who through life have been distinguished for true goodness, were eminently disinterested.

Forgetfulness of self, and that amiable temper which at once ensures and imparts happiness, are not adverse to decision of character. On the contrary, their combination is natural, and necessary to produce high excellence. We are not told that the disciple who leaned on the breast of his Master, was deficient in decision of character, but we know that he possessed more of those amiable virtues which engage affection, than he, who "sudden and quick in quarrel," drew his sword, and smote the servant of the high-priest. The ardent temperament, which prompted the asseveration, "though I die with thee, I will not deny thee," is alluring ; but John withstood the shock of temptation, when Peter fell.

To teach the science of self-government, is the great end of education. Every hint, to assist in promoting a correct balance of feeling, is important to the mother. She will probably, sometimes, be annoyed, by a tendency to peevish-

ness, in her little ones. Let her be doubly watchful against being fretful herself. Nothing is sooner caught, by those whose virtues are feeble, than the language of complaint. If we indulge in it ourselves, how can we hope to suppress it in our children? With what propriety can we reprove them? Let us check in their presence, every murmur that may rise to our lips, and teach them by our own cheerful manner, to walk with an open and admiring eye, through the picture-gallery of life. "Keep aloof from sadness, says an Icelandic writer, of the 12th century, for sadness is a sickness of the soul. Men would often give gold, to buy back a passionate word, and nothing so destroys unity, as the exchange of evil language."

Kind words, and affectionate epithets between children of the same family, are delightful. Though the love of brothers and sisters, is planted deep in the heart, and seldom fails to reveal itself on every trying emergency, yet its developments and daily interchange, ask the regulation of parental care. Competitions should be soothed, differences composed, and forbearance required, on the broad principle of that fraternal duty, which God has enjoined.

In familiar conversation, examples might be quoted from history, of the sweet exercise of fraternal affection, where the softening influences of

the christian religion were unknown. Some little listeners were once very pleasantly impressed, by hearing the story of the love of the Emperor Titus, for his brother Domitian. It was the more praise-worthy, because there was between them no congeniality of taste. Domitian often spoke unkindly to his brother, and after his elevation to the throne, even attempted to instigate the army to rebellion. But Titus made no changes in his treatment. He would not suffer others to mention him with disrespect. He ever spoke of him, as his beloved brother, his successor to the empire. Sometimes, when they were alone, he earnestly entreated him with tears, to reciprocate that love which he had always borne him, and would continue to bear him, to the end of life. This fraternal attachment, was the more affecting, because exemplified by a heathen, and partaking of the character of that precept of the religion of Jesus, to "render good for evil," which he could never have been taught.

The department of the older children of the family, is of great importance to the younger. Their obedience, or insubordination operates throughout the whole circle. Especially, is the station of the eldest daughter, one of eminence. She drank the first draught of the mother's love. She usually enjoys most of her counsel, and companionship. In her absence, she is the natural

viceroy. Let the mother take double pains to form her on a correct model, to make her amiable, diligent, domestic, pious, trusting that the image of those virtues, may leave impression on the soft, waxen hearts, of the younger ones, to whom she may, in the providence of God, be called to fill the place of a maternal guide.

Children should be required to treat domestics with propriety. Those, on whom the comfort of a family so essentially depends, are entitled to kindness and sympathy. The theory, that industry, and good conduct are worthy of respect, in whatever rank they are found, cannot be too early illustrated and enforced on the members of a household. “Do not press your young children into book learning, said Spurzheim, but teach them *politeness* ;” meaning the whole circle of charities, which spring from the consciousness of what is due to their fellow beings.

Be careful to teach your children gratitude. Lead them to acknowledge every favour that they receive, to speak of their benefactors, and to remember them in their prayers. Accustom them to distinguish with a marked regard, their instructors, and those who have aided them in the attainment of goodness or piety. It is an interesting circumstance in the life of Ann, Countess of Pembroke, who was distinguished more than two centuries since, by her learning, her de-

cision of character, the languages she acquired, and the honours she enjoyed, that she erected a monument to the memory of her tutor, and always spoke of him with the most affectionate veneration, as her guide in the rudiments of knowledge.

Filial love should be cherished. It has especially, a softening and ennobling effect on the masculine heart. It has been remarked that almost all illustrious men, have been distinguished by love for their mother. It is mentioned by Miss Pardoe, that a "beautiful feature in the character of the Turks, is reverence for the mother. Their wives may advise or reprimand, unheeded, but their mother is an oracle, consulted, confided in, listened to with respect and deference, honoured to the latest hour, and remembered with affection and regret even beyond the grave. "Wives may die, say they, and we can replace them, children perish, and others may be born to us, but who shall restore the mother when she passes away, and is seen no more?"

Gratitude is a principal ingredient in filial affection. It often reveals itself in a most touching manner, when parents moulder in the dust. It induces obedience to their precepts, and tender love for their memory. A little boy was once passing the ornamented garden of a rich man. He was observed to look earnestly and wishfully at some sprouts, that were germinating on the trunk of

an old poplar. On being asked what he wanted, he said "My mother loved flowers, and every green living thing. She has been dead two years, and I have never planted one where she sleeps. I often wish to. I was just thinking how pretty, one of these would look there." The gentleman kindly gave him a rose-bush, and the fresh wand of a weeping willow. Then the poor, little fellow lifted up his streaming eyes, and gave thanks in a broken voice for himself, and for his dear, dead mother.

In developing the character of our children, let us ever keep in view their distinct departments, sentient, social, intellectual, accountable; and give nutriment, and exercise, to each. Let us make them industrious, as a means of happiness, and a safeguard from temptation. The value of time should be taught them, even of its smallest particles. Sir Walter Scott, in enforcing the sentiment of Franklin, that "time is money," has well added, "when we change a guinea, the shillings escape, as things of small account; so when we break a day by idleness in the morning, the rest of the hours lose their importance in our eyes." But from the highest of all motives, that for our days, hours, and moments, we must give account to God, should we warn our children to improve their time, and dread to waste it.

Yet not in studies above their years, or in irksome tasks, should children be employed. The joyous freshness of their young natures should be preserved, while they learn the duties that fit them for this life, and the next. Wipe away their tears. Remember how hurtful are heavy rains to the tender blossom just opening on the day. Cherish their smiles. Let them learn to draw happiness from all surrounding objects: since there may be some mixture of happiness, in every thing but sin. It was once said of a beautiful woman, that from her childhood, she had ever spoke smiling, as if the heart poured joy upon the lips, and they turned it into beauty.

May I be forgiven, for so repeatedly pressing on mothers, to wear the lineaments of cheerfulness? "To be good, and disagreeable, is high-treason against the royalty of virtue," said a correct moralist. How much is it to be deprecated, when piety, the only fountain of true joy, fails of making that joy visible to every eye. If happiness is melody of soul, the concord of our feelings with the circumstances of our lot, the harmony of our whole being, with the will of the Creator, how desirable that this melody should produce the response of sweet tones, and a smiling countenance, that even slight observers may be won by the charm of its external symbols.

A mother, who was in the habit of asking her children, before they retired at night, what they had done through the day, *to make others happy*, found her young twin-daughters silent. The older ones, spoke modestly of deeds and dispositions, founded on the golden rule, "do unto others, as you would that they should do unto you." Still those little, bright faces, were bowed down in serious silence. The question was repeated. "I can remember nothing good, all this day, dear Mother. Only, one of my schoolmates was happy, because she had gained the head of the class, and I smiled on her, and ran to kiss her. So she said I was good. This is all, dear Mother."

The other spoke, still more timidly. "A little girl who sat by me, on the bench at school, had lost a baby-brother. I saw that while she studied her lesson, she hid her face in the book and wept. I felt sorry, and laid my face on the same book, and wept with her. Then she looked up, and was comforted, and put her arms round my neck. But I do not know why she said, that I had done her good."

The mother knew how to prize the first blossomings of sympathy. She said, "come to my arms, beloved ones ; to rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep, is to obey our blessed Redeemer."

Mothers, whatever you wish your children to become, strive to exhibit in your own lives and conversation. Do not send them into an unexplored country, without a guide. Put yourselves at their head. Lead the way, like Moses, through the wilderness, to Pisgah. The most certain mode for you to fix habits, is the silent ministry of example. Thus impressed on the young mind, amid the genial atmosphere of a happy fire-side, they become incorporated with established trains of thought, and with the elements of being. They have their hand upon the soul, till through the grave, and gate of death, it goes forth to the judgment.

I knew the children of a family, who seemed always amiable. Their countenances wore the sunshine of the heart. Among their young associates, they were obliging and kind. If there were mischief or trouble in school, they had neither "part or lot in the matter." Wherever they visited, not only their friends in the parlour, but the servants loved them, and wished them to continue long their guests. Those who were married, diffused throughout their households, the spirit of order and happiness. On inquiring how they had been educated, I found that the mother had kept them much with herself, during the most plastic period of their existence, and that the rules which she had given them, had regula-

ted her own conduct. So, the quiet beauty of her example, and the influences of a happy fire-side, were the machinery which she had used, to render them amiable, benevolent and pious.

A standard of good manners should be established in the family-circle. We appreciate the value of such manners, in mixed society. They are a letter of credit, in the hand of a stranger. So much is every person subject to their fascination, that the unworthy study to acquire them, as a means of ensnaring their prey. Why should the wife, or the husband, lay aside those courtesies, which are associated, with the growth, perhaps, with the birth of their love? Some writer has remarked that the cardinal duties are claimed as rights, but the refined attentions, the watchful kindnesses, which make the stream of domestic life so sparkling, will ever rank as precious favours, which it is ungenerous to omit. They ought not indeed, to be omitted, were it only for the sake of the children, whose eyes are ever fixed upon the parents, in the spirit of imitation. It is not wise to exact from those little beings, the forms of etiquette, which ceremonious intercourse prescribes. They too often demand the sacrifice of honesty of speech, and originality of character. Such observances, vary with ranks, countries, and ages of the world, but the principles of true politeness are the same, resting

on good will to man, and pointing to that more glorious attainment, the love of God.

It was a high testimony to the fine manners of Mrs. Macauley, the accomplished historian, which was once borne by an intimate friend. “I have seen her exalted on the dangerous pinnacle of prosperity, surrounded by flattering friends, and an admiring world. I have seen her marked out by prejudice, as an object of dislike and ridicule. I have seen her bowed down, by bodily pain and weakness. But never did I see her forget the urbanity of a lady, the conscious dignity of a rational being, or fervent aspirations after the highest degree of attainable perfection.”

Perhaps, we reflect too little on the courtesy of Jesus, our Master and Exemplar. “When ye come into an house, said he, *salute it.*” We all know that the oriental modes of salutation, involved much more of ceremony than our own. Still, the Saviour, who ever decried the giving of undue honour to men, sanctions and enjoins them, at the entrance of every dwelling. Neither are these marks of respect, to be reserved for those whom we best love, or most desire to conciliate. “If ye salute your *brethren* only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so?” The inference is obvious, that all should be treated with respectful

regard, as beings formed by the same Creator, children of one great family.

From his disciples, though not educated in refinement, or called from among the ranks of the rich and noble, do we not receive the same instruction? Was it not a humble fisherman, who inspired by the religion of the skies, said, "*be courteous?*" The courtesy of a christian, is no trifling part of education. Mothers, teach it to your children.

LETTER VII.

HEALTH.

WE have all of us seen, with pity and regret, a sickly mother, burdened with the cares of her household. She has felt that there were employments, which no one could discharge as well as herself, modifications of duty, in which the interest of her husband, the welfare of her children, the comfort of the family, were concerned, which could not be deputed to another, without loss. Therefore, she continues to exert herself, above, and beyond her strength.

Still, her step is languid, and her eye joyless. The "spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Her little ones observe her dejected manner, and grow sad. Or, they take advantage of her want of energy, and become lawless. She, herself, cannot long persist in a course of labour, that involves expense of health, without some mental sympathy. The most amiable temper will sometimes become irritable, or complaining, when the shrinking nerves require rest, and the demands of toil, and the claims upon painful thought, are perpetual. Efforts, which

to one in health, are like dew-drops shaken from the eagle's wing, seem to the invalid, like the ascent of the Alps, or like heaping Pelion upon Ossa.

Admitting, that a sickly woman has sufficient self-control, to repel the intrusion of fretfulness, and preserve a subdued equanimity, this, though certainly deserving of praise, is falling short of what she would wish to attain. The meek look of resignation, though it may cost her much to maintain, is not all that a husband wishes, who coming from the vexed atmosphere of business or ambition, would fain find in his home, the smile of cheerfulness, the playful charm of a mind at ease. Men prize more than we are aware, the health-beaming countenance, the elastic step, and all those demonstrations of domestic order, in which unbroken activity delights. They love to see a woman equal to her own duties, and performing them with pleasure. They do not like to have the principal theme of domestic conversation a detail of physical ills, or to be expected to question like a physician, into the variety of symptoms which have supervened since their departure. Or if this is occasionally borne with a good grace, where ill health is supposed to be temporary, yet the saddening effects of an enfeebled constitution, cannot always be resisted, by him who expected in his wife a "yoke-fellow,"

able to endure the rough roads, and sharp ascents of life. A nature, possessing great capacities for sympathy and tenderness, may doubtless be improved by the exercise of those capacities. Still the good gained, is only from the patient, or perhaps, the christian endurance of a disappointment. But where those capacities do not exist, and where religious principle is absent, the perpetual influence of a sickly and mournful wife, is as a blight upon those prospects which allure men to matrimony. Follies, and lapses into vice, may be sometimes traced to those sources which robe home in gloom.

If to a father, the influence of continued ill health in the partner of his joys, is so dispiriting, how much more oppressive is it to those little ones, who are by nature allied to gladness. Childhood, whose richest heritage is its innocent joy, must hush its sportive laugh, and repress its merry footstep, as if its plays were sins. Or if the diseased nerves of the mother, do not habitually impose such sacrifices, it learns from nature's promptings, to fashion its manners, or its voice, or its countenance, after the melancholy model of the sufferer whom it loves, and so forfeits its beautiful heritage of young delight. Those sicknesses to which the most robust are subject, by giving exercise to self-denial, and offices of sympathy from all the members of a household, are

doubtless, often blessed as the means of improvement, and the messengers which draw more closely the bonds of true affection.

But it must be sufficiently obvious, that I speak of that want of constitutional vigour, or of that confirmed feebleness of habit, which either create inability for the duties, which in our country devolve upon a wife, a mother, and the mistress of a family, or cause them to be discharged in languor and wretchedness. And I speak of them, that the attention of those, who conduct the earliest physical education of females, may be quickened to search how evils of such magnitude may be obviated.

Mothers, is there any thing we can do, to acquire for our daughters a good constitution? Is there truth in the sentiment sometimes repeated, that our sex is becoming more and more effeminate? Are we as capable of enduring hardship as our grand-mothers were? Are we as well versed in the details of house-keeping, as able to bear them without fatigue, as our mothers? Have our daughters as much stamina of constitution, as much aptitude for domestic duty, as we ourselves possess? These questions are not interesting to us simply as individuals. They affect the welfare of the community. For the ability or inability of woman, to discharge what the Almighty has committed to her, touches the equili-

brium of society, and the hidden springs of existence.

Tenderly interested as we are, for the health of our offspring, let us devote peculiar attention to that of our daughters. Their delicate frames require more care, in order to become vigorous, and are in more danger through the prevalence of fashion. Frequent and thorough ablutions, a simple and nutritious diet, we undoubtedly secure for all our children.

But I plead for the little girl, that she may have air and exercise, as well as her brother, and that she may not be too much blamed, if in her earnest play, she happen to tear, or soil her apparel. I plead that she be not punished as a romp, if she keenly enjoy those active sports, which city gentility proscribes. I plead that the ambition to make her accomplished, do not chain her to her piano, till the spinal column which should consolidate the frame, starts aside like a broken reed ; nor bow her over her book, till the vital energy which ought to pervade the whole system, mounts into the brain, and kindles the death-fever.

Mothers, if you would do your duty, get a treatise on Anatomy, and become familiar with its rudiments. At least, acquaint yourself with the physiology of the skin, the lungs, the circulation of the blood, and the digestive organs. I cannot

flatter myself that I am imparting any thing new, when I mention that the former is composed of three laminæ or layers, and that the inner one, is a tissue of nerves and blood-vessels, so minute, that the point of the finest needle cannot be introduced, without puncturing some of them. Through these ever-open, and invisible pores, the waste matter of our continually changing bodies escapes, equaling in weight, more than twenty ounces every twenty-four hours. This evacuation, if checked, so overtaxes other excretory organs, as to produce disease, and if retained on the surface, and returned through the absorbents, acts as a poison in the system. Daily and entire ablution, with correspondent friction, is necessary to preserve in a healthful state, an organ of such great importance to the animal economy.

The sympathy between the skin and lungs is so established, and intimate, that a neglected state of the former, has much to do with the production and progress of pulmonary disease, that frequent and favourite messenger of death. Food, after being received into the stomach, sends forth its nutritious portions, in the form of chyle, to be mingled with the blood. This junction is formed at the right side of the heart, but the mixture of new and old fluid, is not fitted to sustain life, until propelled through the left side of the heart, it is

submitted by the agency of the lungs to the air; then taking its true colour, it is transmitted through the arteries to the most remote extremity, and called back again from its life-giving visits, to pass review in its sleepless citadel. Thus the whole volume of blood, which in an adult is from three to four gallons, passes once every three minutes through the heart, on its way to and from the lungs. And those unresting labourers, the heart and lungs, from the first moment of existence, till we return to dust, continue their labours, independent of our volition, wondrous symbols of that Almighty goodness which, whether we wake or sleep, is "new every morning, fresh every moment."

Outlines of the mysterious mechanism of our clay-temple, we ought certainly to study, that we need not through ignorance interfere with those laws on which its organization depends. Rendered precious, by being the shrine of an undying spirit, our ministrations for its well-being, assume an almost fearful importance. Appointed as the mother is, to guard the harmony of its architecture, to study the arts on which its symmetry depends, she is forced to perceive how much the mind is affected by the circumstances of its lodgement, and is incited to cherish the mortal, for the sake of the immortal.

Does she attach value to the gems of intel-

lect? Let her see that the casket which contains them, be not lightly endangered, or causelessly broken. Does she pray for the welfare of the soul? Let her seek the good of its companion, who walks with it to the gate of the grave, and rushes again to its embrace, on the morning of the resurrection.

Mothers ought to be ever awake to the evils of compression, in the region of the heart and lungs. A slight ligature there, in the earlier stages of life, is fraught with danger. To disturb or impede those labourers, who turn the wheels of life, both night and day, how absurd and ungrateful. Samson was bound in fetters, and ground in the prison-house, for a while, but at length he crushed the pillars of the temple, and the lords of the Philistines perished with him. Nature, though she may be long in resenting a wrong, never forgets it. Against those who violate her laws, she often rises as a giant in his might, and when they least expect it, inflicts a fearful punishment.

Fashion seems long enough to have attacked health in its strong holds. She cannot even prove that she has rendered the form more graceful, as some equivalent for her ravages. In ancient Greece, to whom our painters and sculptors still look for the purest models, was not the form left untortured? the volume of the lungs allowed free play? the heart permitted without

manacles to do the great work which the Creator assigned it?

The injuries inflicted by compression of the vital parts, are too numerous to be here recounted. Impaired digestion, obstructed circulation, pulmonary disease, and nervous wretchedness, are in their train. A physician distinguished by practical knowledge of the Protean forms of insanity, asserted, that he gained many patients from that cause. Another medical gentleman of eminence, led by philanthropy, to investigate the subject of tight-lacing, has assured the public, that multitudes annually die, by the severe discipline of busk and corset. His theory is sustained by collateral proof, and illustrated by dissections.

It is not sufficient, that we mothers, protect our younger daughters, while more immediately under our authority, from such hurtful practices. We should follow them, until a principle is formed, by which they can protect themselves, against the tyranny of fashion. It is true, that no young lady acknowledges herself to be laced too tight. Habits that shun the light, and shelter themselves in subterfuge, are ever the most difficult to eradicate. A part of the energy which is essential to their reformation, must be expended in hunting them from their hiding-places. Though the sufferer from tight-lacing will not

own herself to be uncomfortable, the laborious respiration, the suffused countenance, the constrained movement, perhaps, the curved spine, bring different testimony.

But in these days of diffused knowledge, of heightened education, is it possible that any female can put in jeopardy, the enjoyment of health, even the duration of existence, for a circumstance of dress? Will she throw an illusion over those who strive to save her, and like the Spartan culprit, conceal the destroyer that feeds upon her vitals? *We know that it is so.* Who that has tested the omnipotence of fashion, will doubt it? This is by no means, the only sacrifice of health that she imposes. But it is a prominent one. Let us, who are mothers, look to it. Let us, be fully aware of the dangers of stricture on the lungs and heart, during their season of developement.

Why should not we bring up our daughters, without any article of dress which could disorder the seat of vitality. Our sons hold themselves erect, without busk, or corset, or frame-work of whale-bone. Why should not our daughters also? Did not God make them equally upright? Yes. But they have "sought out many inventions."

Let us educate a race who shall have room to breathe. Let us promise, even in their cradle,

that their hearts shall not be pinioned as in a vice, nor their spines bent like a bow, nor their ribs forced into the liver. Doubtless, the husbands and fathers of the next generation, will give us thanks.

Yet if we would engage in so formidable a work, we must not wait until morbid habits have gathered strength. Our labour must be among the elements of character. We must teach in the nursery, that "the body is the temple of the Holy Ghost." We must leave no place in the minds of our little ones, for the lunatic sentiment, that the mind's healthful action, and the integrity of the organs on which it operates, are secondary to the vanities of external decoration. If they have received from their Creator, a sound mind, and a sound body, convince them that they are accountable for both. If they deliberately permit injury to either, how shall they answer for it before their Judge?

And how shall the Mother answer it, in whose hand the soul of her child was laid, as a waxen tablet, if she suffer Fashion to cover it with fantastic images, and Folly to puff out her feverish breath, melting the lines that Wisdom pencilled there, till what Heaven would fain have polished for itself, loses the fair impression, and becomes like common earth.

LETTER VIII.

ECONOMY.

I HAVE a few words to say to mothers on a point of domestick economy. In a country like ours, where there are few large estates, and where almost every father of a family is subjected to some kind of labour, either for the maintenance of those who are dear, or the preservation of possessions on which they are to depend when he shall be taken from them, the duty of the "help-meet," to lighten as far as possible, these burdens by a consistent economy, is too obvious to need illustration. To adapt whatever may be entrusted to her care, to the best ends, and to make it subservient to the greatest amount of good, should be her daily study. There is, perhaps, no community of women, who more faithfully, or dexterously, than the wives and mothers of New England, carry this wisdom and forethought into all the details of that science by which the table is spread, and the apparel adapted to the ever-changing seasons. The same judgment which so admirably regulates food and clothing, it would be desirable to apply to another

and a higher department. It is to mothers, with the care of young children, that these remarks on economy are peculiarly addressed. They have the charge of immortal beings, whose physical, mental and moral temperament, are for a long period, exclusively in their hands. Nothing save the finger of God has written on the tablet, when it is committed to them. It is important that they secure *time* to form deep and lasting impressions.

Let them therefore, devote their first strength, and their utmost effort to the highest duties. The heart soon develops itself, and asks culture. Through the feelings and affections it bursts forth, even while the infant is considered not to have advanced beyond animal nature. The preferences, the passions, reveal themselves, like the young tendrils of the vine, reaching out feebly and blindly. The Mother must be assiduous, in teaching them where to twine. While the character of the babe is forming, let every action and indication of motive, be a subject of observation. But how can she be adequate to this, if the whole attention to the personal comfort of several young children devolves upon herself? If she is to make and mend their articles of dress, bear them in her arms during their period of helplessness, and exhaust herself by toils throughout the day, and watchings by night, how can she have leisure

to study their varying shades of disposition, and adapt to each the fitting mode of discipline, as the skilful gardener suits the plant to the soil? Will she not be sometimes moved to apostrophize them, like the leader of the wandering, repining Israelites, “ how can I *alone* bear your cumbrance, and your burden, and your strife?”

The remedy is, for the mother to provide herself with competent assistance, in the sphere of manual labour, that she may be enabled to become the constant directress of her children, and have leisure to be happy in their companionship. This would seem to be a rational economy. The thrifty village-matron, when she returns from church, takes off her Sunday dress, and deposites it in its accustomed place, substituting one, better fitted to her household duties. She is not blamed for preserving her most valuable garment, for its appropriate uses. Let every mother pay herself the same respect, which the good farmer’s lady pays her “ bettermost gown:” not the homage of a miserly parsimony, but a just protection in freshness and order, for fitting and dignified offices.

“ My husband cannot afford to hire a nurse for the little ones,” said a young friend. We have so many, that we must economize.”

Her mother suggested that the expenditure should be saved in some other department of

housekeeping, in the toilette, or in luxurious entertainment. But the counsel was not accepted by the daughter, who in her zeal for economy, failed to comprehend its elementary principles.

She commenced her task with vigour, and confidence in the correctness of her own decision. Sickness in the various forms that mark the progress of dentition, and neglect of slight diseases in their first symptoms, came upon her young family. Uninstructed by experience, she gave powerful medicines for trifling maladies, or summoned and teased physicians, when Nature was simply perfecting her own operations. The children who had emerged from infancy, were indulging bad dispositions, and acquiring improper habits. She knew it. But what could she do? She was depressed by fatigue. The wardrobe of her numerous little ones, continually required her attention. It would not do for them to be unfashionably clad, or appear worse than their neighbours. So, the soul being most out of sight, must suffer most. Blindness to evil, or hasty punishment, rendering it still more inveterate, were the only resources of her hurried and hurrying mode of existence. For her, there seemed no rest. If health returned to her young family, mental diseases were disclosed. She became spiritless, nervous and discouraged. She was harrassed by the application of force among

the inferior machinery. When it was necessary that power should be brought to bear upon the *minds* committed to her care, she was painfully conscious that her energies had spent themselves in other channels. Running up the shrouds like a ship-boy, the helm where she should stand, was left unguided. The pilot, steering among rocks, does not weary himself with the ropes and rigging, which a common sailor as well manages, and better understands.

The temper and constitution of the young mother became equally impaired. Her husband complained of the bad conduct and rude manners of the children. "What could she do? She was sure there was nothing but toil and trouble, by night, and by day." This was true. There was an error in economy. The means were not adapted to their highest ends. She was an educated woman, and a christian. Her children should have reaped the advantage of her internal wealth, as soon as their unfolding minds cast forth the first beam of intelligence. But she led the life of a galley-slave, and their heritage was in proportion.

Is this an uncommon example? Have we not often witnessed it? Have we not ourselves exhibited some of its lineaments?

The proposed remedy, is to employ an efficient person, in the nurse's department. I say *efficient*,

for the young girls, to whom this responsibility is sometimes entrusted, are themselves an additional care. "I am not willing, said a judicious father, to place my infant in the arms of one, with whom I would not trust an expensive glass dish." Half-grown girls, are not the proper assistants to a young mother. They themselves need her superintendence, and create new demands on time already too much absorbed.

"I know she is small, says the mistaken parent, but she will do to *hold a baby*."

Holding a baby, is not so slight a vocation, as many suppose. Physicians assert that deformity is often produced, by keeping an infant in those uneasy positions to which a feeble arm resorts; and health and life, have been sacrificed to accidents and falls, through the carelessness, or impatience of an over-wearied girl. The argument for the substitution of an immature nurse, drawn from the circumstance of the saving of expense, is doubtless futile; for the apparel and means of education, which a conscientious person will feel bound to provide for a young girl, will equal the wages of a woman. In many departments of domestick labour, the help of minors is both pleasant and profitable, and the lady who brings them up properly, confers a benefit on the community, and may secure to herself, lasting gratitude and attachment.

But the physical welfare of infancy is of such immense importance, that it seems desirable that those whom the mother associates with herself in this department, should have attained full strength, both of mind and body. Moral integrity, patient and kind dispositions, industrious habits, and religious principles, are essential to the faithful discharge of these deputed duties, and to render that influence safe, which they will necessarily acquire over the little being whose comfort they promote. Such qualities are deserving of respect, in whatever station they may be found, and I would suggest both as a point of policy and justice, the attaching higher consideration to the office of a nurse, when her character comprises them. If the nurture of an immortal being for immortality is an honourable work, and if its earliest impressions are allowed to be most indelible, those who minister to its humblest wants, partake in some measure of its elevated destiny ; as the porters and Levites derived dignity from the temple-service, though they might not wear the Urim and Thummim of the High-Priest, or direct the solemn sacrifices, when the flame of Heaven descended upon the altar.

To the inquiry why this kind of assistance, is more needed by the mother in our own days, than by her of the “olden time,” by whom the care

of children, the operations of the needle, the mysteries of culinary science, and all the complicated duties of housekeeping, were simultaneously performed, without failure or chasm, the natural reply is, that the structure of society is different, and from an educated parent, the modern system of division of labour, asks new and extended effort. She requires aid, not that she may indulge in indolence, but that she may devote the instruments entrusted to her, to their legitimate uses. There is perhaps, no sphere of action, where indolence is both so fatal and so sinful, as in that of a mother of young children. She is a sentinel who should never sleep at her post. She cannot be long relieved without hazard, or exchanged without loss. She should therefore be careful of her strength, her health, and her life, *for her children's sake*. If she employ a subaltern, it is that she may give herself more exclusively to their highest and best interests.

Let her be persuaded, whatever may be the demands upon her time, or their advantages for gaining knowledge from other sources, *to spend systematically a portion of time in their daily instruction*. Let her also be with them, when they retire at night, to review the day's little gatherings and doings, and to point the tender spirit to the Giver of all its gifts. Let the period devoted

to them, be as far as possible uninterrupted by the presence of others, and chosen, in the morning, before care has seized the teacher's mind, or temptation saddened the beloved pupil. Let the time be spent in reading some book adapted to their comprehension, conveying useful knowledge or moral and religious instruction, questioning them respecting its contents, adding such illustrations, as the subject, or their peculiar state of intellect and feeling may render appropriate ; having it always understood that at night, some recapitulation will be expected of the lessons of the day.

The Mother who regularly does this, will find herself in the practice of a true and palpable economy. She will be induced to furnish herself with new knowledge and to simplify it, for those whom she seeks to train up for the kingdom of heaven. She will not strive to combine fashionable amusements, or dissipation of thought, with her solemn and delightful obligations. She will labour as "ever in her Great Task-Master's Eye," to do for the minds and souls of her children, that which none can perform as well as herself, which if she neglects, may not be done at all, and if left undone, will be a loss, for which Eternity must pay.

LETTER IX.

EARLY CULTURE.

WHO can compute the value of the first seven years of life? Who can tell the strength of impressions, made ere the mind is pre-occupied, prejudiced or perverted? Especially, if in its waxen state, it is softened by the breath of a mother, will not the seal which she stamps there, resist the mutations of time, and be read before the Throne of the Judge, when the light of this sun and moon, are quenched and extinct?

We are counselled on this point by the humblest analogies. Does not he who would train a dog, or tame a tyger, or exhibit an elephant for gain, begin his system early, before time has rendered the muscles rigid, or rooted ferocity in habit, or set bounds to sagacity by impairing the docile spirit? And is animal nature worthy of more earnest effort than intellectual? or can motives of gain be compared with the hallowed impulses that move parents to seek the good of their offspring?

The husbandman wakes early, though the mother sleeps. He scarcely waits for the breath

of spring to unbind the soil, ere he marks out his furrow. If he neglected to prepare the ground, he might as well sow his seed by the way-side, or upon the rock. If he deferred the vernal toil, till the suns of summer were high, what right would he have to expect the autumn-harvest, or the winter-store? The florist mingles his compost, he proportions warmth and moisture, he is patient and watchful, observant of the atmosphere and of the seasons, else he knows that his richest bulbs would be cast away. Should the teacher of the infant heart, be less diligent than the corn-planter, or the culturer of a tulip?

The industry displayed in the various trades and occupations, should be a stimulant to the mother, who modifies a material more costly than all others, more liable to destruction by brief neglect. The hammer of the early workman, admonishes her not to wait till the "burden and heat of the day." Is the manufacturer of delicate fabrics inattentive to the nature of the fleece which he purchases, or to the lineage of the flock that produced it? Are not the most refined processes of the loom affected by the character of the leaf on which the silk-worm fed, or the fibre of the flax that is broken like a malefactor upon the wheel? The artizan who is ambitious to spread the most snowy and perfect sheet for the writer's pen, is he indifferent whether the

pulp be pure? if he would tinge it with the cerulean or the rose-tint, does he neglect to infuse the colouring matter with the elemental mass? Is the builder of a lofty and magnificent edifice, careless of its foundations, and whether its columns are to rest upon a quicksand, or a quagmire? And should the maternal guardian of an immortal being, be less anxious, less skilful, less scrupulous, than the worker in wool and silk, in linen and paper, or than the artificer in brick and stone? Shall the imperishable gem of the soul, be less regarded than the "wood, hay and stubble," that moulder or consume around it?

Mothers, take into your own hands, the early instruction of your children. Commence with simple stories, from the Scriptures, from the varied annal of history, from your own observation of mankind. Let each illustrate some moral or religious truth, adapted to convey instruction, reproof or encouragement, according to your knowledge of the character and disposition of your beloved students. Care and study may be requisite to select, adapt, and simplify. But can any do this so patiently as a mother, who feels that her listening pupil is a part of herself?

Cultivate in your children, tenderness of conscience, a deep sense of accountability to God, a conviction that their conduct must be regulated by duty, and not by impulse. Read to them

books of instruction, selected with discrimination, or make use of them as texts for your own commentary. In your teachings of religion, avoid all points of sectarian difference, and found the morality which you inculcate, on the Scriptures of truth. Give one hour every morning, to the instruction of your children, one undivided hour to them alone. Ere they retire, secure, if possible, another portion of equal length. Review what has been learned throughout the day, recall its deeds, its faults, its sorrows, its blessings, to deepen the great lessons of God's goodness and forbearance, or to sooth the little heart into sweet peace with Him, and all the world, ere the eyes close in slumber. Let the simple music of some evening hymn, and their tender prayer of contrition and gratitude close the daily intercourse with your endeared pupils, and see if this system does not render them doubly dear.

Do not deprive them, of these stated seasons of instruction, without the most imperative necessity. Let your youngest share in them, as soon as it opens its bright eyes wider at the words, "shall mother tell a story?" Then the little flower of mind, is ready for a dew-drop. Let it be small, and so fragrant, that another will be desired at the morrow's dawn. Speak of the dove that winged its way back to the ark, and of the good man who put forth his hand and drew her in

through the window, to gladden her sorrowing mate. Tell how the wide, wasting waters swept over a disobedient world. Describe the lonely ark upon the mighty deep, bearing in safety the righteous family, while all the ungodly of the earth were drowned. Speak of the head of Ararat rising above the dark main, of the exultation of the rescued animals, the warbling song of the birds let loose from their prison, and the higher joy of Noah, and his beloved ones, who knew how to pray and praise their Almighty Deliverer. One sacred story, thus broken into parts, is sufficient for many feedings of the infant mind. Be careful not to surfeit it, nor yet too much to indulge the curiosity of the ear to hear, without awakening the understanding to extract some useful aliment. In the broad range of sacred story, give a prominent place to the life and teachings of our Saviour, to the many forms in which his compassions wrought among the sick, the hungering, and the blind, the tempest-tost, the dying, and the dead, how he loved little children, and drew them to his bosom, and blessed them, when sterner souls forbade their approach.

Not only by the volume of Inspiration, but by their daily intercourse with the animal creation, and from the ever open page of Nature, guide them to duty and to God. Take in your arms, their favourite kitten, and pointing out its grace-

ful proportions, teach a lesson of kindness. While the dog sleeps at the feet of his master, tell of the virtues of his race, of their fidelity and enduring gratitude, and bespeak respect for the good qualities of the inferior creation. Teach their little feet to turn aside from the worm, and spare to trample the nest of the toiling ant. Point out the bird, "laying the beams of its chambers" among the green leaves, or the thick grass, and make them shudder at the cruelty which could rifle its treasures. Inspire them with love for all innocent creatures, with admiration for every beautiful thing; for it is sweet to see the principles of love and beauty, leading the new-born soul to its Maker.

As you explain to the young child, the properties of the flower that he holds in his hand, speak with a smile of Him, whose "touch perfumes it, and whose pencil paints." Make the voice of the first brook as it murmurs beneath the snow, and the gesture of the waving corn, and the icicle with its pen sharpened by frost, and the sleeted pane with its fantastick tracery, and the nod of the awful forest, and the fixed star on its burning throne, adjuncts in teaching your child the wonderful works of the Almighty.

The Mother who is thus assiduous in the work of early education, will find in Poetry an assistant not to be despised. Its melody is like a harp

to the infant ear, like a trumpet stirring up the new-born intellect. It breaks the dream with which existence began, as the clear chirping of the bird wakes the morning sleeper. It seems to be the natural dialect of those powers which are earliest developed. Feeling and Fancy put forth their young shoots ere they are expected, and Poetry bends a spray for their feeblest tendrils, rears a prop for their boldest aspirations.

Even its first intercourse with the young mind, may be for a higher purpose than amusement. Entering the nursery, hand in hand with song, it need not confine itself to unmeaning carols, or to useless echoes. It may be as the sun-beam to the broken soil. Quicken perception, and giving pleasant food to memory, it leads to that inquisitive research, which next to application, ensures proficiency in the more severe sciences, and higher departments of knowledge.

Still, its principal and best affinity is with the heart. Its power of creating tender and indelible impressions, has not always been fully appreciated. This stamps it as an efficient co-adjutor in moral and religious instruction. It comes forth as the usher and ally of the mother. It goes with her into the mental field, in the freshness of the grey dawn, ere tares have sprung up to trouble the good seed. It nurtures the listening babe, with the "sweet words of sweetly

uttered knowledge." "It holdeth, said Sir Philip Sydney, little children from their play, and old men from the chimney corner." Especially does it prompt the cradle-sleeper to love the God and Father of us all, and as he advances in stature, walks with him amid the charms and harmonies of Nature, speaking the language of a clime, where beauty never fades, and where melody is immortal.

Simple, vocal musick, the mother will be desirous to introduce into her system of early education. Its softening, soothing, cheering influences, have been too often tested to need additional evidence; and its affinity with devotion has been felt by every one who has heard a little group singing their sacred song ere they retired to rest, while even the infant on its mother's knee, imitated her tones, its heart swelling with the spirit of praise, ere the understanding was able to comprehend its dialect.

Yet it was not my intention in this letter, to have defined the department of early education, but simply to urge mothers to consider it their province. I feel persuaded, that after they have for a few years, superintended daily and systematically, the culture of the beings entrusted to them, they would not be willing to exchange it for the place, or the power, or the fame of any created being. Yet amid this happiness, who

can refrain from trembling at the thought, that every action, every word, even every modification of voice or feature, may impress on the mental tablet of the pupil, traces that shall exist forever.

Other teachers may toil, perhaps in vain, to purify the streams that have grown turbid, or to turn them back from perverted channels. The dominion of the mother is over the fountain, ere it has contracted a stain. Let her not believe that the impressions which she may make in the first years of life, need be slight, or readily effaced by the current of opposing events. The mother of the Rev. John Newton, was assiduous in her instructions, at that early period. It was the only season allotted her for intercourse with him. When he was seven years old, Death summoned her from his side. Faithfully had she laboured to implant principles of piety. After he was withdrawn from her guidance, strong temptation beset him. He yielded, until he became exceedingly degraded. Many sorrows were his portion ere his restitution to virtue. When at length, he became a faithful and laborious divine, he bore witness that the early precepts of his mother, had interposed between him and destruction. In a letter to Dr. Doddridge, he says, "To the care of my mother, I owe that bias towards religion, which with the co-operating grace

of God, at length reclaimed, and brought me back to the paths of peace." Listen to him still more fully on this subject. "A prudent and pious woman in the capacity of wife and mother, is a greater character than any hero or philosopher, of either ancient, or modern times. The first impressions which children receive in the nursery, under the mother's immediate care, are seldom obliterated. Sooner or later, their influence conduces to form the future life. Though the child trained up in the way he should go, may for a season depart from it, there is always reason to hope that he will be found in it, when he is old. The principles instilled into the mind in infancy, may seem dormant for a while, but the prayers with which the mother watered what she planted there, are as some old writers say, "upon the Lord's file." Times of trouble recall these principles to the mind, and the child thus instructed, has something to recur to. *Thus it was with me.* I was the only son of my mother. She taught me. She prayed for me, and over me. Had she lived to see the misery and wickedness into which I afterwards plunged, I think it would have broken her heart. But in the Lord's time, her prayers were answered. Distress led me to recollect her early care. So was I led to look the right way for help. Happy and honoured is the woman, who is thus qualified to instruct her chil-

dren, and does it heartily, in the spirit of faith and prayer."

Friends! Mothers! how long will it be, ere we shall be removed from our stewardship? ere a stranger may be seated where we have been wont to preside at the table, and the hearth-stone? How brief will be the interval ere the infants that we now caress, shall be rocking the cradle of their own infants, or treading like us the threshold of that house of forgetfulness, whence there is no return? Bound on this ceaseless, unresting march in the footsteps of buried generations, enlisted in that warfare whence there is no discharge, let us on whom such pressing responsibilities devolve, take as our motto, "*what thou doest, do quickly.*"

The dews of the morning are scarcely more fleeting, than the plastick period of the minds on which we operate. Every day removes them further from our jurisdiction. The companions with whom they are to associate, the world in which they are to act, hasten onward with opposing influences, and an indurating power. Now, while the garden of the soul is ours, let us give diligence to implant the germs of holy principle, of unswerving goodness, of humble piety, of the fear of sin, of faith in the Redeemer. "*Now, while it is called to-day.*"

God in bestowing on us the privileges of being

christian mothers, has nothing higher in reserve for us, till we take the nature and the harp of seraphs. Then, as we stand adoring near the Throne, may the chorus of our joyful song be, "Lo, here are the children whom thou hast graciously given thy servants. *Not one is lost.*"

LETTER X.

DOMESTIC EDUCATION.

I AM not without hope of persuading mothers, to take charge of the entire education of their children, during the earlier years of life. After devoting daily a stated period, morning and evening, to their moral and religious training, I cannot but trust that the pleasure of the communion will lead to a more extended system of domestic culture. Indeed, it is not possible to convey instruction to the *heart*, without acting as a pioneer for the *intellect*. The docility, the application, the retentive energy, which the mother awakens in her child, while she teaches it the principles of justice, and the love of truth, and the reverence of the Creator, lead her continually, though it may be unconsciously, into the province of scholastick education.

“Whoever educates his children well, says Xenophon, in his letter to Crito, gives them much, even though he should leave them little.” If parents felt that by spending three hours daily they might secure for each of their offspring, an ample fortune, not to be alienated, but made sure

to them through life, would they grudge the sacrifice? Let the mother try, if by an equal expenditure of time, she may not purchase for them a patrimony, which rust cannot corrode, or the robber rifle, or the elements that sweep away perishable wealth, have power to destroy. If she feels it impossible to dispense with their attending school, let her at least teach them herself to *read*, ere she sends them there. I once heard an aged and intelligent gentleman, speak with delight of the circumstance, that he learned to read from maternal instruction. He gave it as one reason why knowledge was pleasant to his soul, that its rudiments entered there with the association of gentle tones, patient explanations, and tender caresses.

The correct reading of our copious language, is not a branch of such simplicity, that it may be well taught by careless, or slightly educated instructors. The perfect enunciation which is so important to publick speakers, is best acquired when the organs of articulation are most flexible, and ere vicious intonations are confirmed by habit. One of the most accomplished orators that I have ever heard, used to take pleasure in referring his style of elocution to his mother, who taught him early to read, and devoted much attention to his distinct utterance, and right understanding of the subjects that he rendered vocal.

"A principle of equity, said a lady to her child, should lead you to a clear and careful articulation, for what right have you to rob a single letter of its sound? Still less right have you to cheat those friends of their time, who are listening to you." "Speaking so as not to be understood, and writing so as not to be read, are among the minor immoralities," said the excellent Mrs. H. More.

A mother, who succeeds in teaching her child to read, and partakes the delight of perceiving new ideas enrich and expand its intellect, will be very apt to wish to conduct its education still further. And if it is in her power to do so, why does she send it to school at all, during its most susceptible years? Who can be so deeply interested in its improvement as herself? Why then does she entrust it to the management of strangers? Why expose it to the influence of evil example, ere its principles are sufficiently strong to withstand temptation? Why yield it to the excitement of promiscuous association, when it has a parent's house, where its innocence may be shielded, and its intellect aided to expand?

"I have no time," replies the mother. How much time will it require? Two or three hours in a day, is a greater proportion than any teacher of a school would devote exclusively to them. Even if they could receive such an amount of in-

struction, the division of their own attention among their companions, would diminish its value to them.

Let their lessons be short, but thoroughly committed. While they study, it ought not to be necessary for you to watch and superintend them. The presence of a judicious nurse, or of even the oldest child, should be sufficient to preserve order, while you reserve your more precious time for recitation, explanation, and illustration. I am bold to say, if three hours a day, were wisely proportioned and systematically set apart for this purpose, it would be all that the first eight or ten years of life would need, and more than they usually obtain. The intellect of quite young children should be sparingly taxed. Physical dangers of a formidable nature are connected with their close confinement, or long enforced application. If you have a rural spot, where they can have pure air and exercise, consider it a blessing; and let the play, and muscular activity which nature points out, be a part of your daily system of education.

I imagine another mother saying in the depth of her humility, "I am not qualified." Profound erudition is not demanded. Yet if it were, who ought to have a stronger motive to attain it, than a mother, for her children's sake? Reading, orthography, and the definition of words, penman-

ship, arithmetic, and the expression of thought in the simple epistolary or descriptive style, she is surely capable of teaching. Still, these can scarcely be too thoroughly learned, since they are the necessary ground-work of a complete education. I should think the patience and affection of the mother, would render her an excellent instructress in those branches, which demand continual repetition, and exercise. Is there anything so inexplicable in Geography, and the elements of the Natural Sciences, that she need shrink back from them, aided as she is by treatises from the most gifted minds?

A course of History can scarcely be grasped by the intellect in its tutelage; yet biographical selections may be made from it, at the mother's pleasure, in her own words, and combined with the outlines of chronology. For instance, when her young pupils have learned the geographical features of a country and demonstrated its relative position, and localities on their atlas, she may reward their accuracy, by describing one of the most illustrious characters which it has produced, either in ancient or modern times. This little fragment of history, with its atom of chronology, will act as a grappling-iron to the geography which was made its basis, and each will give to the other, a firmer hold on memory. A number of such facts, presented under the double allurement of

stories and of rewards, and riveted by the mother's care, will serve as stepping stones, when the broad stream of History, flowing from Eden onward, shall be forded by the wondering traveller.

Yet if she still shrinks back from undertaking a system of intellectual culture, let her not dare to neglect instruction in religious duty. For if "religion is but the ritual of a tender and lowly mind, looking through the beauty and majesty of Nature, to its God," willing to believe what he has revealed, and docile to do what he has commanded, there seems in the simplicity of childhood, a preparation for its spirit, which the lapse of years may impair.

Prayer should be taught, not as a task, but a privilege, a stated and intimate communion with a Father in Heaven. Reverence the secrecy of devotion in your child. When it has learned the sacredness of the duty, do not press it to its performance, in the presence of others. Establish the habit, and then permit the soul to breathe forth its simple aspirations, unfettered and undaunted.

Make the sabbath, a day of serious happiness. Teach your children that it is their *duty* to be religious, that religion is at the foundation of all duty, and all enjoyment, and that God's consecrated day is the peculiar season for its growth and culture. See that the books which they

read, are congenial to this holy season. How often do the aged carry to the utmost verge of life, the catechisms and sacred poetry they were accustomed to learn in their childhood, and on the sabbath. When Beza, the celebrated reformer, became old, and had forgotten even the names of his friends, and of the objects by which he was surrounded, he could still repeat the Epistles of St. Paul, which he committed to memory, when very young, and principally on the sabbath.

“I have too much to do in my family, says a careful matron, to attend to the instruction of my children.” Do not be too ambitious a house-keeper. Is it not better that there should be some deficiency in the luxurious variety, or elegant arrangement of a table, than in the hearts and minds of your children? But why need there be deficiency any where? Energy, and adherence to system, will accomplish wonders.

The mistress of a large household, in New England, was exceedingly attentive to all the minutiae of housekeeping. Her brass and silver, and mahogany, bore the finest polish. She excelled in rich culinary compounds, and her table had in the neighbourhood no competitor. She was so situated, that much of her own personal exertion was necessary to produce these results. Her ambition was solaced to know that she maintained among nice housekeepers, the high-

est place. The dresses of her many children evinced care, and attention to the reigning modes. But she did not feel that she had any time to bestow on their minds. They attended school when it was convenient, but their progress having no parental supervision, was exceedingly desultory. Their moral and religious culture also suffered, though she was by profession and in reality a christian. A wasting sickness, impeding all activity, forced her into habits of deeper reflection, and she felt that in her scale of duty, she had permitted the least important to usurp the highest place. With affecting regret she said, as death approached, "I have led a laborious life, scarcely allowing myself time for thought. It seems principally to have been spent in preparing food and clothing for the family. I can recollect but little else. And now I feel that I have "spent my money for that which is not bread; and my labour for that which satisfieth not."

"I have so many children, says another, that I cannot think of doing more than seeing that they are sent to school." How many had Mrs. Ramsay, of South Carolina, when she took charge of their whole education, and prepared her sons for college? Does not her biographer mention that she was the mother of eleven children, during the first sixteen years after her mar-

riage? Beside the charge of a large and well-ordered household, and assisting her husband in the literary labours which he combined with his medical profession, she gave the most indefatigable attention to the physical, religious and intellectual education of her children. That they might daily read their Bible with pleasure, she connected with it an extensive collection of prints, for the younger, and for the more advanced, "Watt's view of Scripture history," "Newton on the Prophecies," and other books which unite the Old with the New Testament, and make sacred and uninspired History, mutual interpreters. While endeavouring to store their minds with useful knowledge, she compiled for them a grammar of the English language, not finding the treatises of Lowth and Ash, from which she had herself been instructed, easily subject to the comprehension of childhood. From her accurate knowledge of French, she was able early to impart it to them, and for their sakes studied the Greek and Latin classicks, until she became an excellent teacher in both those languages. With the same motive, she prosecuted the study of Botany, to considerable extent, refreshed her knowledge of Natural and Civil History, Biography, Astronomy, Chronology, Philosophy, with an extensive course of Voyages and Travels. She continued her instructions daily with regularity, and conducted

her daughters at home, through the studies and accomplishments taught at boarding schools, and her sons through a course which thoroughly fitted them to enter college.

“I do not feel prepared, says another mother, to give up all society, and turn myself into a care-worn school-teacher.” This would indeed be undesirable. Whoever forsakes social intercourse, deadens the impulse to generous sympathy and active benevolence, which like the nervous energy in the physical constitution, quickens the remotest extremities of the frame, and impels to harmonious and efficient exertion. Mrs. Ramsay, the striking example whom we have just quoted, preserved her social feelings, in healthful activity, though she seldom visited during the day. Evenings, when the stated instruction of her beloved pupils was closed, she was ready, and cheerful, for the intercourse of friendship. That a routine of ceremonious visiting, involving late hours, high dress, luxurious entertainment, and much expense of time and thought, is not consistent with the faithful instruction of children, is admitted. Will any christian mother hesitate which she ought to renounce? I am most happy to have a case in point. A young lady, whose beauty, wealth, accomplishments, and European travel, rendered her an object of admiration among the fashionable circles of our most fash-

ionable metropolis, after her marriage, undertook the domestick education of her three little ones, and writes, "I find more heartfelt pleasure, more agreeable retrospection, in *one hour* spent in endeavouring to elicit thought and feeling from my children, than in any other pursuit, or amusement." A precious suffrage from one perfectly qualified to judge, and an encouragement to such mothers as shrink at the threshold of their higher duties.

Methinks, I hear the voice of some fair sceptic exclaiming, "I doubt whether it would be *as well* for my children to be educated at home. They require the stimulus to exertion, which is found in schools." Are you quite sure of it? Is not the emulation which you quote, often but another name for "envying and strife?" Will not the duty of obedience, the desire of pleasing you, or the satisfaction of knowledge, impel your children to the brief lessons which you appoint? Do they *all* require the external prompting to which you allude? Is not *one* capable of higher motives? If so, select that one as an example, and let your approbation bearing decidedly upon that one, "provoke the others to good works." If all are equally torpid, there are methods by which all may be aroused. I knew a mother who kept two blank books, one bound in red, the other in black. For every well-committed lesson, or proof

of improvement, a mark of credit was entered in the red book. Indolence, and other faults, gained a mark in the sad-coloured one. At the close of every week or month, the father with some seriousness of ceremony, inspected these records, and earnestly aided by his praise or blame, the arduous task of the maternal teacher. Another mother, used only the red book for her children, allowing them for a certain number of marks, a stipulated sum, paid at the end of every month, and to be devoted to their charities. Some allege that this introduces a too mercantile feature into education. Is it not better than indolence? Various other modes may be devised to give impulse to domestic culture, for why need a mother be less ingenious, or less fruitful in expedients, than a school-mistress? Yet let her be careful not to urge too much the progress of her younger pupils, lest health suffer, or the temper gather asperity from competition.

Possibly, there may be some mother frank enough to say, "My children must go to school: it is *such a relief* to have them sometimes *out of the way*." So a mother thought, who took her little girl from the nursery, and bade her scarce older brother lead her with him to school. There she sat upon the hard bench, her tiny feet swinging above the floor, till the feebly-strung muscles were weary and in pain. She looked in her

wondering innocence, upon the ways of naughty children, and imbibed more of the evil, than of the goodness which rebuked it. She opened her ears wide at the sound of improper words, and adopted their use, without knowing their meaning. So she, who was sent from home, because of the noise of her lively play, or the interruptions of her curious questioning, brought a deeper care, by becoming a subject of moral discipline.

She was once proceeding homeward, more demurely than when she first attended school, for the consciousness of wrong conduct had found its way to her heart, and quelled its buoyant happiness. It was touching to see a little one so sad. Her brother left her for a moment to slide down an ice-covered hill. He charged her to wait for him, in the spot where he placed her. But soon she attempted to run to him. A pair of gay horses threw her down, and a loaded sleigh passing over her, literally divided her breast. She was taken up breathless, a crushed and broken flower. *She was out of the way.*

A mother, in one of our smaller country-towns, had a large family of daughters. She thought it would be a *relief* to her, if but one of them were *out of the way*. So she selected the wildest, to be sent to a boarding-school. She had been accustomed to rural sports and employments, and

free exercise about her father's grounds. The impure atmosphere of a crowded city in summer, the close stoves in winter, the comparative and enervating stillness of the whole year, induced a change of habits, and declension of health. Long sitting at the piano, and the rigid compression of corsets, troubled the seat of life. When she returned home on vacations, it was exultingly remarked by the parents, how ladylike she had grown, and how much more delicate than her ruddy sisters. Indeed, she was pale as a lily, and inactive to a remarkable degree. It was not long ere spinal disease revealed itself, and muscular energy, and pure animal spirits were lost. She indeed existed, but the wreck of her former self. Debility, and confinement cut her off from society, and from the joys of life. She was *out of the way*.

There is yet another form of putting children ✓ *out of the way*, which though by no means common in our country, is still visible with certain modifications, in fashionable life. It consists in consigning their infancy too exclusively to the charge of hirelings, and to the bounds of the nursery. A young mother complained that her children were so numerous, and so near of an age, that she had neither repose or comfort. She found it impossible to nurse them. Her husband also thought it would hurt her form, and

make her old before her time. By this philosophy, she reserved to herself all the suffering of introducing infancy into the world, and excluded that heartfelt and hallowed intercourse, which gives to pain "an over-payment of delight."

She placed her nursery in the highest story of her lofty house, that she need not be disturbed by its noise. She said she went there "as often as possible, though it was excessively fatiguing to climb those endless stairs." But she always procured an ample number of nurses, without reference to expense, and was satisfied that they had the most excellent care. One day she was informed that her youngest was sick. She went to it, but thought the nurse was unnecessarily alarmed. She staid with it as long as was in her power, considering she was engaged to a ball that evening. After she was entirely dressed, she took pains to come up again and inquire after it. The nurse told her it was no better. She was sure the nurse was unreasonably timid. It had but a slight cough. Still she did not remain at the ball as late as usual, or dance with her usual spirit. She said to her husband, that such was her anxiety for the little one, that she should not have gone at all, had she not felt under the strongest obligations to attend the first entertainment of her most particular friend. At her return, she hastened to the nursery. The hope-

less stage of croup had seized the agonizing victim. Another, also betrayed the same fatal indications. The skill of the physician, and the frantic grief of the mother, were alike vain. With the fearful suddenness which often marks the termination of the diseases of infancy, two beautiful beings soon lay like sculptured marble. With the assiduous care of the mother, the result might indeed have been the same, and yet it was a touching and mournful thought at this time of sorrow, that it had been a principal object, ever since their birth, to have them kept *out of the way*. And now they had gone—to return no more.

But will He who gave us our children, justify us in devising means to have them put out of our way? Was it to be supposed, that the mother on whose bosom he laid them, would be mainly anxious to escape from their care?—that she should find her nerves so much injured by their merry voices, their healthful play, or their active curiosity, as to be willing to endanger their well-being, if they might only be removed from her presence?

I am aware that these thoughts on domestick education, may be deemed prolix. And yet it would be easier to apologize for saying so much, than to satisfy the conscience for having said so little: so important is it, that mothers be aroused

to do more for the true welfare of their children than they have hitherto done. "No instruction, says an eloquent French writer, will throw deep roots into a country, unless it reach children through the mother, and men through women. The public instructor is only a dry instrument, who teaches the alphabet ; the mother of a family is a moral power, ripening thought, at the same time, that she opens hearts to love, and souls to charity."

It is not to be expected, that all who might desire it, are so situated as to be able to take charge of the education of their children. Still there are many whom fortune favours, who have "no heart for the matter." It would seem the duty of those mothers to attempt it, who are relieved from the necessity of labour for their subsistence, who have comfortable health, a competent share of knowledge, and minds open to improvement, especially if they have a rural situation, where their little pupils can enjoy free exercise, a room which can be devoted exclusively to their instruction, and in the family a sister, friend or well-trained dependant, capable of acting as assistant or substitute.

Let us keep our children *for our own*, during their earlier years. The world will have them long enough afterwards.

LETTER XI.

IDIOM OF CHARACTER.

ONE striking advantage of a system of education conducted by the mother, is, that it may be adapted to the different dispositions of its subjects. In a school, this is almost impossible. Had the teacher, the tact to discover the nameless idiosyncracies of those under his care, the very nature of his office, would preclude him from thoroughly availing himself of that knowledge. His code of laws cannot bend to the differing taste, and construction of his pupils. How can he turn aside from the labours of scholastick culture, to study the endless variety of character, and to inquire whose feeble virtue needs a prop, or whose timid intellect, encouragement.

This knowledge of the varying nature of her children, is almost intuitive to a discerning mother. Those who have reared up large families, assert that there are no two alike. The self-confidence of one, requires restraint, and the diffidence of another seeks a sheltering kindness; one, is controuled through the affections, another, by arguments addressed to the understanding;

to one, the reproof of the eye, brings tears, another must have the induction of particulars, and the poignancy of remonstrance, or of suffering, to produce contrition. The evil of subjecting all to the same discipline, must be obvious. Yet, where they are cultivated in masses, it seems inevitable. Some are so utterly confounded by the presence of superiors, as never to do themselves justice; others with a reckless hardihood pass on, disguising both superficial attainment, and defective principle. Some Cowper may shrink and agonize, unpitied; some Benedict Arnold wear his traitor's mask undetected; some Buonaparte enact on a miniature scale, schemes of latent ambition, or of petty tyranny.

These elements of character, the mother has the means of discovering, and should attempt the task to rectify. She would blame the folly of the gardener, who should plunge the amaryllis in dry sand, or shelter the Norwegian pine in his green-house: let her avoid similar errors in the nurture of plants that are to exist forever.

Permit me to say to those mothers who interest themselves in the education of their children, be assiduous early to implant domestic tastes in the minds of your daughters. Let your little girl sit by your side, with her needle. Do not put her from you, when you discharge those employments which are for the comfort of the fami-

ly. Let her take part in them, as far as her feeble hand may be capable. Teach her that this will be her province, when she becomes a woman. Inspire her with a desire to make all around her, comfortable and happy. Instruct her in the rudiments of that science, whose results are so beautiful. Teach her, that not selfish gratification, but the good of a household, the improvement of even the humblest dependant, is the business of her sex. When she questions you, repay her curiosity, with clear and loving explanations. When you walk out, to call on your friends, sometimes take her with you. Especially, if you visit the aged, or go on errands of mercy to the sick and poor, let her be your companion. Allow her to sit by the side of the sufferer, and learn those nursing-services which afford relief to pain. Associate her with you. Make her your friend. Purify and perfect your own example for her sake. And while you mingle with domestic training, and with the germs of benevolence, a knowledge of the world of books, to which it will be a sweet privilege to introduce her, should you be able to add not a single fashionable accomplishment, still be continually thankful, if you have been successful in shielding her from the contagion of evil example.

The Countess of Pembroke, illustrious for her love of science, and the fortitude with which she

endured the trials of those troublous times in which she lived, thus speaks in her journal, with affecting simplicity, of her obligations to maternal care and piety.

“ From my dear mother, I drew that milk of goodness, which makes the mind strong against all the storms of fortune. Many dangerous devices of enemies, have I passed through without harm, by the help, as I think, of her prayers, incessantly imploring of God, my preservation and safety. In my domestick troubles, I gave myself up to retiredness, as much as I could, making good books, and virtuous thoughts my companions, which can never be daunted by slanders, or adversities, however unjustly they may happen. And by a happy disposition, I overcame evil, the prayers of my blessed mother, helping me thereunto.”

In the discipline of sons, mothers need a double portion of the wisdom that is from above. Let them ever keep in view, the different spheres of action, allotted to the sexes. What they blame as obstinacy, may be but that firmness, and fixedness of purpose, which will hereafter be needed to overcome the obstacles of their adventurous course. Perhaps, it is hardly to be expected that they should be reduced to the full degree of feminine subordination, any more, than inured to the routine of domestic employment. The German

poet, has well depicted the early-unfolded lineaments of the ruling sex.

" Boys are driven
To wild pursuits, by mighty impulses.
Out of a mother's anxious hand they tear
The leading-strings, and give the reins to nature,
Even as the sportive hoof of the young horse,
Raises the dust in clouds."

The mother, who in the infancy of her children, puts into the arms of the girl a doll, and patiently endures the noise from the hammer of the boy-baby, conforms to the difference and to the destination, which has been marked on them by Creating Wisdom. But is she therefore to take any less pains to soften and mould her son to his duty? Oh no. On the contrary, she must take more, and begin earlier. Her toil for him, must emphatically be, amid the dews of the morning. For by the constitution of society, he must be earlier removed from the influence of home, than his pliant sister, and by the innate consciousness of being born to bear rule, will sooner revolt from the authority of woman. Let the mother, while she refrains from attempting to break down the barrier which an Unerring Hand erected between the sexes, lose no time in enthroning herself in the heart of her son. Let her cultivate tenderness of conscience, and fix deep in his soul the immutable distinction be-

tween right and wrong, that from an early implanted reverence for the law of God, he may be qualified to "become a law unto himself." She should keep her hold on his affections, and encourage him to confide to her without reserve, his intentions and his hopes, his errors and his enjoyments. Thus maintaining her pre-eminence in the sanctuary of his mind, her image will be as a tutelary seraph, not seeming to bear rule, yet spreading perpetually the wings of purity and peace over its beloved shrine, and keeping guard for God.

Let mothers beware of adopting the opinion, that though they may do much for daughters, yet sons are beyond their controul. This is a false, and fatal conclusion. It is true, that with regard to them, the inspired injunction may be quoted with double power, "what thou doest, do quickly." Maternal influence, unless early riveted, is often reduced to a mere shadow, by the pursuits and excitements of popular education. "I compare, the sending a boy to a publick school, or college, says a judicious writer, to the act of the Scythian mothers, who threw their new-born children into the sea: the greater part, were of course, drowned, but the few who escaped with life, were uncommonly strong and vigorous." Could any additional argument be needed to induce mothers to throw the shield of their pre-

serving and hallowing influences over their sons, ere they emerge from the cradle, it might be found in the fact which both history and observation confirm, that the most illustrious men have been often modified in their early years, by the hand of the mother. “Give us, said an experienced instructor, such boys as have been blessed with the instructions of pious mothers. Truths thus instilled, are interwoven with the fibres of the soul.”

Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great, was an extraordinary woman. Notwithstanding the rudeness of her own native realm of Britain, and the low state of learning among her sex, she wrote several works, among which was a book of Greek verses, and the principles which she early infused into the mind of that christian Emperor, undoubtedly had great influence in determining his future course.

The mother of the illustrious Lord Bacon, breathed into his mind in the forming period of childhood, her own love of learning, and while she instructed him in the rudiments of science, awakened that spirit of liberal curiosity and research, which afterwards induced him to take “all knowledge to be his province.” Her influence also on the mind of King Edward 6th, to whom in his early years she was governess, was eminently happy. He derived from her, much

of that spirit of deep and consistent piety, which in her own youth, led to every indication of reverence for religion, and moved her, among her other studies, to translate from the Italian, twenty-five sermons on abstruse and important tenets of faith.

The Baron Cuvier, from the extreme feebleness of his childhood, came almost constantly under the care of his mother. The sweetness of this intercourse, dwelt on his memory throughout the whole of his life. He loved to recall her attentions, to dwell on every circumstance that reminded him of her. But she did not confine her cares to his health alone. She exerted herself to form his mind. She taught him to read fluently at the age of four years, made him draw under her inspection, listened daily to his recitations in Latin, though she had not herself been instructed in that language, perused with him the best authors, instilled into him a reverence for religious duties, and fostered that ardent desire for knowledge, which afterwards rendered him so illustrious.

It is a touching testimony which William Roscoe, so celebrated for his writings and his philanthropy, thus pays to his maternal guide. After speaking of a teacher to whom he was gratefully attached, he says to "his care, and to the instructions of a kind and affectionate mother, I believe

I may safely attribute any good principles which may have appeared in my conduct during life. To my mother, I owe the inculcation of those sentiments of humanity, which became a principle in my mind. Nor did she neglect to supply me with such books, as contributed to my literary improvement." Sir Walter Scott says "if I have been enabled to do any thing in the way of painting the past times, it is owing very much to the studies, with which my mother presented me."

The agency exercised by the mother of Washington, in forming that character which the world delighted to honour, is a subject of elevating contemplation. His undeviating integrity and unshaken self-command, were developments of her own elements of character, fruits from those germs which she planted in the soil of his infancy. She combined the Spartan firmness and simplicity, with the deep affections of a christian matron, and all this concentrated influence was brought to bear upon her son, who by the early death of his father, passed more entirely under her discipline. He, who has been likened to Fabius, to Cincinnatus, and to other heroes of antiquity, only to show how he transcended each by the consistency of a christian, he who caused the shades of Mount Vernon to be as sacred to the patriot as the shrine at Mecca to the pilgrim, shares his glory with her who wrought among the

rudiments of his being, with no idle or uncertain hand. The monument which now designates her last repose, speaks eloquently to her sex, bidding them to impress the character of true greatness upon the next generation. It warns them to prepare by unslumbering efforts, for their own solemn responsibility. Let her who is disposed to indulge in lassitude, or to forget that she may stamp an indelible character either for good or evil, on the immortal mind submitted to her regency, go, and renounce her errors and deepen her energies and relumine her hopes, at the tomb of "Mary, the mother of Washington."

But though we cannot all rationally expect to rear distinguished men, since it is the lot of but a few to attain distinction, yet it is equally our duty to persevere kindly and prayerfully, with unpromising materials. The future payment often transcends the culturer's hope. The mother of the celebrated Sheridan, who was herself a literary woman, pronounced him the dullest and most hopeless of her sons.

There is sometimes a levity of character, which persuades a desponding mother, though incorrectly, that her instructions make no abiding impression. "I do not dislike extreme vivacity in children, said the excellent Miss Hannah More. I would wish to see enough to make an animated character, when the violence of animal spirits

shall subside by time. Such volatile beings are thought peculiarly difficult to manage, but it is easier to restrain excess, than to quicken inanity." When we see the demands which the cares and labours of life make upon the animal spirits, it seems safest to set out with a superflux. Gravity in childhood, may become stupidity in old age, and the mother who feels herself tried with the exceeding vivacity of her young family, can remember that it is a temperament which this hard-working world will be sure to reduce, even if their own good sense should fail to regulate it.

There are also instances on record to encourage and cheer them, with regard to the most unpromising children, of whom perhaps they are tempted to say in moments of anguish, that they have "laboured in vain, and spent their strength for naught." Dr. Barrow, one of the most learned and eloquent English divines, on whom the critical Dr. Johnson pronounced the strongest verdict of praise, was in early life regardless of study. He seemed even to have conceived an aversion for books, and became so addicted to idle and contentious company, that his father in bitterness of spirit exclaimed, "should it please God to take away any of my children, I pray him that it may be my son Isaac." His mother had long patience. She sustained herself on His strength, who has power to bring good out of

evil. Parental care, and scholastic instruction were persevered in, and gained a great reward. As the son who was pronounced so hopeless, grew up, he evinced a temper which won all hearts, and made such progress in science, as to fill with honour, the mathematical chair, which Newton afterwards assumed. Among the most profound and universal scholars which his country could boast, he maintained the highest rank. He was also distinguished as a powerful advocate of that religion, whose transforming influences he so eminently illustrated.

The excellent Cecil, whose writings are the wealth and solace of many a pious heart, was in early life, both unpromising and undutiful. "I was desperate, said he. I was determined to go on board a privateer. But I had a pious mother. She talked to me, and wept while she talked. There are soft moments, even to desperadoes. God does not all at once abandon them." One of the largest and most intelligent audiences in London, who were under his spiritual care, were once exceedingly moved to hear him exclaim from his pulpit, with surprising candour and humility, "as a publick witness for God and for his truth, I must tell you that you should never despair. No distressed woman ever hoped more against hope, than the mother of your preacher. But she prayed, and waited patiently. She put

her trust in an Omnipotent Arm. She not only prayed, but she instructed his mind, and then waited God's season. She lived long enough to hear that child preach the gospel, which he had once despised. And she said, 'Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.' "

Though the great power of maternal teaching over the mind, during its period of waxen tenderness, is now generally conceded, though some of the most distinguished men have been proud to refer the early blossoms of intellect, the promptings of virtue, or the aspirations of piety, to the influence of a mother, yet how far the same agency may check the career of guilt, or silently and stedfastly operate even among the "children of disobedience," it is less easy to ascertain. A man who from a youth of irreligion, was reclaimed to piety, acknowledged that though he used to receive the admonitions of his mother, with an affectation of pride and scorn; they fixed themselves in his heart, like a barbed arrow, so that tears would fall from his eyes, as he passed along the streets. The vicious seldom make such frank disclosures. Their clouded trains of sentiment are not often accessible to the recording pencil. Still, we have a case in point, a voice from the region of guilt, speaking of a pious mother.

In one of the prisons of New-England, is a

man, considerably past his prime, who has been a doer of evil, and a wanderer over the face of the earth. Retribution of various kinds, has overtaken him in his career of crime. Yet he has endured all, with singular hardihood and obstinacy. He acknowledges that nothing among the punishments of man, or the precepts of God, has ever made him "feel serious, but the words of his mother." When her last hour drew nigh, she sent for him to her chamber. He was then a boy of twelve years old. She took his hand, as he stood by her bed, and said, "I am going to leave you, and shall return no more." In the most solemn manner, she besought him to remember his Creator, and so to take care of his soul, as to meet her in Heaven. She continued to admonish him, until the hand which pressed his, was cold in death. For almost half a century, this son was passing through grades of crime, too revolting for description. Yet in his deepest degradations, he confesses that he has never been able utterly to drive from his conscience the words of his pious mother, or to recall them without emotion. May they not yet be made instruments of repentance? May not the seed which has so long retained life in an uncongenial soil, yet be quickened to bear fruit? Who can define the limits of a mother's influence, save the God of the mother?

A pious mother, in her prayers with her little son, was accustomed to lay her hand upon his head. She died, while he was yet too young, to realize the loss which he had sustained. He grew up an uncurbed and wayward boy, whom none seemed to understand, and few to love. Yet in his most reckless and passionate paroxysms, something seemed partially to restrain and rule him. He said it was a hand upon his head, like his mother's hand. Often, he yielded at its touch, and wept bitterly. In the flush and fever of youth, he travelled widely over foreign lands. Vice tempted him, and the virtue which should have withstood it, had but a frail rooting. Still, something withheld him. It was the same hand upon his head, a soft, cool hand. He dared not utterly to cast off its controul.

In his old age, he said to some children, "a hand is upon my head, upon my few, hoary locks, the same hand that used to rest in prayer, among the fresh, sunny curls of my infancy. And if I am ever saved, it will be by that mother's hand, and my Redeemer's mercy."

LETTER XII.

SCHOOLS.

FROM the ardour with which I have advocated domestic education, I hope it will not be inferred that I feel little interest in the welfare of schools. Oh no! I would not be so untrue to my country, as to omit any argument which would tend to their support and elevation. “For the wealth of a state, said the great Reformer, consists not in having great treasures, solid walls, fair palaces, weapons and armour; but its best, and noblest wealth, and its truest safety, is in having learned, wise, honourable and well-educated citizens.”

If I have urged mothers to do much for their children, it is because I have felt it to be both their duty and their privilege to do more than they ever have done. If I have laboured to shew them what I deemed “the more excellent way,” I have not been ignorant that but few would think of entering it. With the multitude, whose industry earns a subsistence, the education of their children would be impossible. The few, who may be persuaded to assume it, will probably depend more or less, on the assistance of private teach-

ers. So, that the character, attainments and principles of the great body of instructors, are important to the prosperity and safety of the land. It was the pen of Burke, that wrote "Education is the cheapest defence of a nation." "It is a better safeguard for liberty, says Governor Everett, than a standing army. If we retrench the wages of the schoolmaster, we must raise the wages of the recruiting sergeant."

In order to elevate the character of our schools, let them be more select. They are often so much thronged, and exhibit such disparity of age, that the portion of individual improvement must be small and impeded. In Prussia, which we are still constrained to acknowledge as our model, in many features of scholastic education, fifteen are considered an ample number, for a single mind to rule, and operate upon, to advantage. A teacher, to fulfill the higher purpose of his profession, should secure the intimacy and seek the confidence of his pupils. But how can this be done, when they are so numerous, and so frequently changed, as to continue comparatively strangers?

Those schools which desire eminence, should establish habits of order and punctuality. The division of time, and its adaptation to different studies, should be as clearly defined to each class, as the position of countries on a map. Rules,

embracing every gradation of duty or variety of deportment, which bear on moral and intellectual proficiency, should be drawn up, explained, daily read, and if necessary, the signature of each pupil taken, as a pledge of their assistance in maintaining them. The correct discipline of a school is its moral wealth ; each of its members should feel, that whoever infringes it, impairs the common stock. It may be sustained with perfect kindness, and often forms a bond of lasting attachment, between teacher and scholar.

More munificence in the salaries of our public schools, would advance their permanence and excellence. Were their income sufficient to induce well-educated men, to choose the work of instruction as a profession for life, they would assume a higher rank, both in theory and practice. Teachers engaged for a transient period, using their school as a stepping-stone to some other station, perhaps, occupied at the same time in the study of the profession on which their future subsistence is to depend, bring but wandering thoughts and divided affections, to a service which demands the concentration of both. The community will find parsimony ill-placed, where the mental and moral culture of its youth are concerned.

Our primary, and district schools, stand most in need of reformation. The education of their teachers, is often exceedingly defective. "In

every age, even among the heathen, said Luther, the necessity has been felt of having good tutors and schoolmasters, in order to make any thing respectable of a nation. But surely we are not to sit still and wait, until they grow up of themselves. We can neither chop them out of wood, nor hew them out of stone. God will work no miracles to furnish that which we have means to provide. We must therefore apply our care and money, to train up and to make them."

The establishment of Normal Schools, would be a blessing to our country. Well-chosen libraries, connected with the schools in our remote villages, are a desirable appendage. A regular system of drawing out and returning the books should be established; perhaps the right of doing so, might be used as a reward of good scholarship, and correct conduct. A condition should always be annexed, that each one who has been favoured with the perusal of a volume, should render some account of its contents to the teacher, in presence of the school, that all may share in the benefit. Some knowledge of the structure of the mind is requisite, to guide even the youngest pupils to improvement. Yet in our obscure villages, if there is any decayed, old woman, who is too feeble to acquire a living by the spinning-wheel, or needle, how often is it said, that she will do to "keep a school for the little ones."

For the little ones! at that most plastic period of life, when the impressions which are received, are to last forever.

Simpson of Edinburgh, in his work on Popular Education, says most justly, "Prussian law-givers have wisely considered, the best plan of teaching, as a dead letter, without good and able teachers; and to expect these without training, is to look for a crop, without plowing or sowing. An instructor, well endowed with knowledge, and distinguished by a lively and exciting manner of communication, who can keep alive wonder, and put into his lessons, a fine admixture of the higher feelings, will possess a power over his pupil's will and happiness, which forms a striking contrast to the heart-withering irksomeness of the old schools, in which an antiquated and most hurtful appeal to the inferior feelings of fear, self-exultation, vanity or covetousness, was found necessary to stimulate the languid faculties."

It is obvious that the character of our schools, should keep pace with the spirit of our very advancing age. This must be done, by demanding of teachers, high degrees of intellectual attainment, of moral principle and of that deep religious feeling, which shunning sectarian barriers, incorporates itself with every imparted rudiment of knowledge. When they are thus elevated, let them be held in honour. Let the statesman

consider them as his co-adjutors. Let jurisprudence view them as having power to check crime in its earliest germinations, and to diminish the population of our prisons, more than all the terrors of the penal code. Let the guardians of virtue and piety, take them into hallowed brotherhood. Let parents uphold them with their marked respect, and foster in their children the noble sentiment of Alexander, "I am indebted to my father for *living*, but to my teacher for *living well*."

Those who have faithfully laboured in the work of education for many years, should receive marks of distinction from the community. Among the schoolmasters in the duchy of Baden, was one who had continued in his profession for half a century. The opening of the year, 1836, completed the jubilee. It was determined to designate it by a festival. The Grand Duke wished also to add his tribute of respect. He sent him the gold medal, only bestowed on the most eminent civilians, and a letter in his own handwriting, a compliment which he seldom paid to sovereigns. The venerable man was conducted in procession to the church, accompanied by vocal music from his pupils, of the most sweet and touching character. Then the Prefect, in the presence of a large assembly, presented him the medal and the autograph, and in an address

proffered the gratitude which the State felt was due, for his services to its children. After prayers, and devotional music, they returned to a festive repast, still enlivened with appropriate music, and with expressions of applause and affection for the grey-haired instructor. The effect of the whole, was not only to breathe new life into the winter of age, but to impress on the minds of all present, that a pious, faithful teacher, was one of the best friends of the nation, and worthy of honour, from all true patriots.

Demonstrations of a regard thus publick, would be repugnant to the delicacy of female instructors. Yet those mothers who commit their heart's jewels to their keeping, should treat them as friends and counsellors, and cheer them with their confidence. Their influence is sometimes stronger in correcting faults of character, than even that of the parent. Let them be selected with the most careful discrimination, and then considered as adjuncts in a high and holy work.

Young ladies of affluence, need not consider it beneath them, to engage in the work of instruction. It is one of the best modes to complete their own education. It consolidates their knowledge, and gives them readiness in bringing it forth when it may be needed. It is no bad preparation for matrimony, for it induces habits of order, industry and self-controul, beside impart-

ing that knowledge of human nature, which is so valuable to her; who expects to sit on the throne of that complicated little kingdom, a household.

If in the female heart, there exists, as has been asserted, the love of power, there is no sphere in which it may be enjoyed so perfectly, as in that of teaching the young mind, through the affections. Hear the testimony of Madame de Genlis, to this point, written after she had reached her fiftieth year. Of a young governess to whose almost sole care her mother yielded her, when a child, she says, "I became attached to her from the first, and my attachment was as lasting, as it was lively. Indeed, I loved and admired her so much, that she might have taught me whatever she had chosen. She had the spirit of an angel, and in our solitary walks spoke often to me of the Deity. We admired with feelings of extasy, the skies, the trees, the flowers, reading in the works of God's hands, the proofs of his existence. That idea, animated and embellished all nature in our eyes. Often, on awaking in the night, I used to leave my bed, and prostrate myself on the floor, in prayer to the Deity." Such an effect had the goodness of heart, and unaffected piety of a young teacher of sixteen, upon the ingenuous heart of her pupil.

The employment of teaching is congenial to happiness. I rejoice to be enabled to add my

own experience to the truth of this assertion. Some of the most delightful years of my life, were devoted to the instruction of young ladies. And how could it be otherwise, when the pleasure of witnessing their improvement, was mingled with the consciousness of improving with them as a fellow-learner, when every laborious department of the vocation, was cheered by the sweetest sympathies, by demonstrations of attachment and gratitude, not to be doubted or mistaken, and which have continued with me into the wane of life. How often, on entering the school-room, and seeing fifteen bright faces turned toward me with the smile of welcome, have I silently given thanks for my blessed employment, and with that desire of setting a good example, which those feel who urge others to it, repeated in my heart, the words of the apostle, “*for their sakes, I sanctify myself.*” Truly ungrateful should I be, not to bear glad testimony to the privilege of being associated with beings, who in the blossom and beauty of youth, sought knowledge and goodness in preference to the vanity and pride of life, and who regarding each other as one lovely family, drew me also within the circle of their own sisterly fellowship. When I recal the lineaments of those beautiful and buoyant spirits, who touched as with the wand of enchantment five downy-footed years, I am reminded of the fabled answer

made by a piece of turf, to him who questioned whence its odour proceeded. "Roses were planted on my soil. Their perfume deliciously penetrated through all my pores. Otherwise, I had been still but a mass of clay."

I hope the time will speedily come, when females shall have charge of the whole education of their own sex. Especially, should those establishments where young ladies reside as in a home, be under feminine superintendence. Had ladies heretofore, considered it as it really is, a *privilege to teach*, they would have claimed such stations as their right, and have strenuously prepared themselves, to fill them with fidelity, and honour. "We shall insist on this point, says Mrs. Hale, that no man ought to name himself *alone*, as responsible for the education of young ladies at a boarding-school. It is a contumely to the delicacy, moral sentiment, and mental ability of our sex, which every true-hearted, noble-spirited woman should resent. It is an infringement of our privileges, and they are neither so many or so large, that we can afford to lose a single link from the chain of influence and respect, without a murmur."

Some of the reasons, why females should qualify themselves to conduct the whole education of their sex, are peculiar to our country. Here, the roads to wealth and distinction, are thrown open

equally to all. Men are continually solicited by strong motives, to gain or glory. Competition in some form or other, stimulates every individual of every rank. So restless, almost sabbathless are their struggles, that foreigners call our country a great work-shop, and say that our men look care-worn from their youth. Moved thus by the incentives to wealth or power, will the most energetic, and the best endowed, stoop to the drudgery of teaching ignorant children? Will they endure it sufficiently long, to become versed in its countless details? Will the mind which is ambitious to amass millions, be content with its petty gains? Here then, is a sphere for the patience and quietness of woman to enter, and win a reward which earth can never give.

It is true, that here and there, men of erudition and benevolence, may devote themselves to the work of education, as to a permanent profession. But what proportion can these be expected to bear, to the wants of our rapidly increasing, and broadly emigrating population? Will the pioneer of the unplanted wild, or the colonist on the western prairie, gather around him the children of an infant settlement, and instil into them the simple rudiments of science, or watch the growth of the moral stamina of principle, and of character? Will the man of enterprize turn from his schemes, the rail-road, the canal, or the

land-speculation, to submit to the tedious processes, or study the nameless refinements of female culture? The wealthy may indeed secure the aid of men of talents, in the education of their daughters. But these will be only exceptions. To borrow the fine simile of the philosophick Douglas, they bear no more comparison to the great mass who need instruction, than "the surface of ocean which is stirred by the breeze, or radiant in the sunbeam, bears to the depth of waters that lie dark and unmoved beneath."

LETTER XIII.

READING AND THINKING.

THIS is emphatically the age of book-making, and miscellaneous reading. Profound thought is becoming somewhat obsolete. The rapidity with which space is traversed, and wealth accumulated, the many exciting objects which arrest attention in our new, and wide country, indispose the mind to the old habits of patient investigation, and solitary study.

Would it not be better for most of us, if we read less? The periodical publications of the day, act as a stimulant to the mental appetite, provoking it beyond its capacity of digestion. "Nothing, says Dugald Stewart, has such a tendency to weaken, not only the powers of invention, but the intellectual powers in general, as extensive reading, without reflection. Mere reading books, oppresses, enfeebles, and is with many, a substitute for thinking."

That we read too much, and reflect too little, will scarcely be doubted. The flood of desultory literature, sweeps on like a deluge, and the mind, like the bird of Noah, spreads a weary wing over

the shoreless ocean, yet finds no resting-place. The disposition to seek out the "chief seats at synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts," which flourishes under our free government, leads some to become authors, and teachers, who have need to learn.

It would be well if more attention were bestowed by parents, on the character of books which are put into the hands of children. Even their style of execution, the character of the type, paper and embellishments, are important; for the taste is earlier formed, than we are apt to imagine. As the education of the eye, is among the first efforts of instruction, it is a pity to vitiate it by evil models. A fair book, is a beautiful object to a child, and will be more carefully preserved, and generally more attentively perused, than if its exterior were repulsive.

Parents should always inform themselves, what books their children are reading. They should, if possible, first peruse them, and see whether they are calculated to impart wholesome nutriment, or stupifying anodyne, or deadly aconite. We cannot take it for granted, that because they have a book in their hand, their souls are safe. I was acquainted with a father and mother, who carefully perused every book which was to be entrusted to their children, and marked with the scrupulousness of refined and religious taste, such

parts as they considered either injurious, or inapposite ; and so perfect were the habits of obedience which they had enforced, that the penciled passages were left unread.

The ambition to have children read at a very early age, seems ill-placed. Apart from any ill effect of infantine application upon health, is not the attainment, rather the sound of words, than the reception of ideas ?

“ My daughter could read as well at three years old, as she does now,” says some fond mother, trespassing a little upon that province of boasting, from which the “ very chiefest of the apostles” has excluded us. Had the child been gifted with the wisdom of the stripling David, it would have objected to be thus girded with the heavy armour of a veteran. What can be the motive for thrusting weapons into a hand, which is too weak to wield them ? What is the use of repeating words, which the understanding cannot comprehend ? Is it even safe, to force an immature intellect into unnatural prominence ?

I once admired precocity, and viewed it as the breath of Deity, quickening to ripe and rare excellence. But I have since learned to fear it. Minds, which in childhood, distanced their contemporaries, so often cease to advance in the same ratio, become restive, inert, or apparently deteriorated, that I cannot but regard with more

true satisfaction, a fabric, built up slowly and solidly.

“I left my boy at his books,” says the parent, with a self-complacent smile. Now, though it is far better to read, than to do mischief, we cannot always be certain, that reading is a defence from every danger. A boy if idle, may choose a book as a refuge from incumbent industry; or if ill-disposed, may select an improper one; or if thoughtless, may read the best volume, without remembrance, or improvement. So, though a taste for reading, is an indication of mental health, and a claim on gratitude, yet let no mother feel perfectly at ease about her children, simply *because they read*; unless she knows the character of the books that engage their attention, and what use is made of the knowledge they impart.

“I shall never feel satisfied, says another parent, till my son acquires a love of reading.” Study the impulse of his mind. Perhaps, his tools are his books. The Roman might have been accounted idle, while he traversed the shore, to collect the wave-worn fragments of the broken ship of Carthage. Yet thence arose the navy of Rome. Noah, might have been accounted visionary, while he built the ark, amid “the contradiction of sinners,” but under the impulse of heaven. We know that Newton was misunderstood, while he pondered the frail orb of the soap-

bubble: and Fulton ridiculed while he propelled that first adventurous vessel, whose countless offspring were soon to mock the winds, and tread the waves with their feet of fire.

Count not the child an idler, who studies the Book of Nature, or invigorates by active exercise, the wonderful mechanism of the body. Yet I would not speak lightly, of the love of reading. Oh no! This cannot be done, by those who reverence knowledge. I simply assert that Nature exhibits a diversity of operations. The various trades and professions must be filled. If all were sedentary men, who would compel the earth to yield her increase? or preside at the forge of the artificer? or speed the shuttle of the artizan? or spread the sail that bears to remotest regions, subsistence and wealth?

The use and ingenuity of the hands, should be encouraged in children. Neither should their ruling tastes be too much counteracted, in selecting their business for life. The due admixture, and welfare of different trades and professions in the body politic, is like the fine economy of the frame. "So that the eye cannot say to the hand, nor again the hand to the feet, I have no need of you." It is becoming but too common to depress mechanics and agriculturists, the very sinews and life-blood of the land, and to elevate a sort of speculating indolence, which in the end, may

make the drones disproportionate to the honey in our national hive.

Yet whatever mental tendency our children may reveal, or to whatever employment they are destined, let us teach them the art of thinking. Let us prize the slightest fragment of thought, which in broken whispers they submit to our ear. While we require their opinion of the sentiments and language of authors, the traits of character which they perceive around, and the trains of thought which they find most salutary or agreeable, let us gently but faithfully regulate, a dazzled imagination, or a defective judgment. It has been said of one of our distinguished divines, that his mind in childhood, received impulse and colouring from a pious mother, who taught him how *to think*. Though she was early removed, he imbibed from her tuition, that love of letters, that taste for original and independent research, which impelled him to conquer all the hardships of restricted circumstances, and obtain the benefits and honours of classic education.

Mothers should never remit their exertions, until by teaching their children to *think*, they familiarize them with the power and use of their own minds. Especially let them not "despise the day of small things," nor despair, if the effect of their arduous labour, is not immediately, or distinctly visible. A friend of the great

Michael Angelo, saw him one day, at work upon a statue. Long afterward, he called, and it was yet unfinished.

“Have you been idle?”

“Ah, no. I have retouched here, and polished there. I have softened this feature, and brought that muscle forth in bolder relief. I have given more expression to the lip, more grace and energy to the form.”

“Still these are but trifles.”

“It may be so. But recollect that trifles make perfection, though perfection itself is no trifle.”

The sculptor upon his dead marble, ought not to surpass in patience, us, who fashion the living image, and whose work is upon the “fleshy tables of the heart.” Can we keep too strongly in view, the imperishable nature, the priceless value of those for whom we toil? In every child, there is an endless history. Compare the annals of the most boasted nation, with the story of one unending existence: has not our Saviour already shown the result, in his parallel between the gain of the whole world, and the loss of one soul? Assyria stretched out its colossal limbs, and sank ignobly, like the vaunting champion, on the plains of Elah. Egypt came up proudly, with temple, and labyrinth, and pyramid, but fell down manacled at the feet of the Turk. Greece, so long the light of the world, deserted by poet

and philosopher, fled, pale as her own sculpture, from the same brutal foe. Rome, thundered, and fell. She struggled indeed, and was centuries in dying. But is she not dead? Can the mummy in the Vatican, from its gilded sarcophagus, be indeed that Rome, before whom the world trembled?

The story of these empires fills many pages. The little child reads them, and is wearied. But when their ancient features shall have faded from the map of nations, and the tomes that recorded their triumphs and their fate, blacken in the last flame, where shall be the soul of that little child? Mother? where?

Will it not then, have but just begun its eternal duration? Will not its history, be studied by archangels? Proud Philosophy, perchance viewed it as a noteless thing, an atom. Doth God, the former of the body, the father of the spirit, thus regard it?

Mothers of the four millions of children, who are yet to be educated in this Western World, to whom our country looks, as her defence and glory, Mothers, of four millions of immortal beings, have you any time to waste? any right to loiter on your great work?

LETTER XIV.

EXAMPLE.

Do I hear some mother say, "if we do all that is proposed for our children, we shall have no time, to do any thing for ourselves. We must certainly give up all hope of mental proficiency. We cannot attempt to cherish intellectual tastes, or to maintain an acquaintance with the literature of the day."

I have heretofore assumed that a mother, who attends to the education of her children, necessarily advances with them. But she may also secure the means of more than a collateral improvement. By a correct system of management, she may avoid falling behind the standard of the times.

To do this, she must understand more than the mere theory of housekeeping. She must have such knowledge of its practical parts, that every wheel may be kept in motion. Disorder in the kitchen-department re-acts directly upon the parlour; and discomfort in the family, deprives the head of it, of all power of pleasant, or profitable mental application. It seems necessary to be

sufficiently acquainted with the duties which we demand of others, to know whether they are properly discharged, and when the wearied labourer requires repose. Novices in housekeeping, often err in these matters. They are deceived by specious appearances, without knowing how their domestics spend their time; or they impose toil, at the proper seasons of rest.

“I have an excellent cook, said a young house-keeper. But I think I shall have to dismiss her, she is so cross. I only wanted her to make me some blanc-mange and custards yesterday, and just because her dinner-dishes were out of the way, and her kitchen put up nice for the afternoon, she did nothing but murmur, that I had not given her those orders before.”

I wish mothers, would encourage in their daughters, a practical knowledge of the culinary art. I do not mean, simply the composition of cakes, sweetmeats and pastry; temptations, which if they were less frequently offered, our catalogue of diseases would be undoubtedly curtailed. But I allude to the broad principles of the art, that platform on which our life stands, the preparation of bread and meat, vegetables and fruit, so that they may be salutary in their influence on the system, and neatly and elegantly presented to the eye. I would not have our tables made either “a snare, or a trap, or a

stumbling-block." It is not well for a lady to shelter any habitual deficiencies of this nature, with the excuse that she attends to her children. "This, ought she to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

Cookery, it is surely the business of the mistress of a family, either to do, or to see well done. So much has been recently written by medical men, on diet and digestion, that no additional proof can be needed, of the close affinity which the culinary art bears to health. Neither is it a despisable discipline of the mind. Its details are almost endless, and whoever conquers them, and has them constantly at command without reference, or mistake, may lay claim to memory, industry, energy, and some other departments of intellect, of no common order.

It is conceded to be desirable that the varieties of exercise for our sex should be multiplied, since it is not always convenient or possible, for them to take it in the open air, and the want of it, is a source of much serious suffering. Here then is a species of exercise, more useful than callisthenicks, more benevolent than the jumping-rope, or battledoor, and bearing on the politicks of the family, with sufficient distinctness to gratify even a love of power. And if the wisdom of a Lacedemonian king was extolled, because to the question "what it was most proper for boys to

learn?" he replied, "what they ought to do, when they come to be men :" can the judgment of the mother be praised, who keeps out of the view of her daughters, what will be required of them when they become women ? Correct judges, will never deem it derogatory to female dignity, to take an active part, when necessary, in whatever promotes the comfort and economy of the household, for which it legislates.

The wife of the Lord Protector Cromwell, was a most excellent, and prudent housewife. He was repeatedly sustained in arduous, and trying situations, by her energy, and dignified character. It has been remarked, that good housewives usually acquire influence over their husbands ; as we are prone to confide in the opinions of those, who are distinguished in their respective spheres. - Yet men of cultivated mind, though not slow in appreciating the value of good housekeeping, usually desire in woman some degree of intellectual congeniality or taste. In proportion as they possess knowledge, will they find it difficult to respect an ignorant companion. So convinced was Rousseau, of the importance of education to domestic intercourse, that he deeply regretted he had not exerted himself to supply its deficiencies in his wife. "I might have adorned her mind with knowledge, said he, and this would have closely united us in retirement. It is especially

in solitude, that one feels the advantages of living with another who can think."

For those who complain that the cares of housekeeping, so absorb their time that nothing remains, there is still the remedy of added simplicity, in the style of living, and in dress. Leisure may be thus rescued, for other and higher pursuits. Competitions may be checked, which sometimes make neighbourhoods, or even villages, more like combatants in the Olympic games, than quiet friends, or sincere well-wishers. Moreover, the ancient athletæ had the advantage ; for though they "*ran all, yet one received the prize,*" but here, they run all, while life lasts, and yet gain neither goal, nor garland.

Is not that serenity of manner and countenance, which distinguishes the sect of Friends, or Quakers, and makes their young females so beautiful, somewhat dependent on their simplicity of garb, and their superiority to those changing modes, which exact from the votary of fashion, the vigilance of Argus, with some good degree of the pliancy of Proteus ?

Simplicity of taste, extending both to dress, and manner of living, is peculiarly fitting in the daughters of a republick. Reflecting minds, even from the ranks of nobility and royalty, have borne suffrage in its favour. They have tested by experience the inability of show, to confer

happiness. Like the magnificent monarch of Israel, who surrounded himself with what the multitude most envy, they have pronounced all, but “vanity and vexation of spirit.” Jane d’Albert, the illustrious Queen of Navarre, strongly expressed her preference of simple and unobtrusive enjoyments. “How inferior, said she, is grandeur of life, to rectitude of mind!” and reserving, as it were, an argument to her theory, even after death, gave orders that her body should be laid, without pomp, in her father’s tomb.

If the superfluities of life are retrenched, the time thus saved, should not be yielded to indolence, or any other modification of selfishness. Home should be the centre, but not the boundary of our duties; the focus of sympathy, but not the point where it terminates. The action of the social feelings, is essential to a well-balanced character. Morbid diseases, are generated by an isolated life: and what is praised as love of home, sometimes deserves the censure of a different name. Simple hospitality, is the handmaid of friendship and of benevolence. In the social visit, heart opens to heart, and we become the sharer of secret joys and sorrows, which ceremonious intercourse would never have unlocked.

A venerable clergyman, who had been eminent through life, for true hospitality, said to his children, “receive your guest, with the same smile,

the same kind welcome, whether you happen to have a nice dinner, or none at all." It is pride, or hardness of heart, which coldly repels the unexpected visitant, because we may be unprepared for an elegant, or luxurious table.

There is something delightful, in the lineaments of southern hospitality. The perfect ease, with which a guest is received, naturalized in the family-circle, and all the painful reserve of a stranger banished, is so beautiful, that it seems to take rank as a virtue. We, of the northern states, contend for the possession of equal warmth of feeling, but have by no means attained to such happy modes of expressing it. We are prone to impute the difference, to different modes of domestic organization. It is true, that to receive visitors, with a house full of servants, or with only one, or as it may happen, none at all, cannot be a matter of indifference, to the lady of the house. If her thought is busy about "what they shall eat, or what they shall drink," when there is no cook, and wherewithal they shall be served, when there is no waiter, and how she, being finite, can best appear at the same time, in parlour and kitchen, and figure both as mistress and maid, she may be forgiven for some indications of an absent mind, or hurried deportment. Still, were we less proud, more willing that our friends should take us just as we are, there would be a

greener growth of sympathy among us, and less cause of complaint, that our frigid climate, has wrought some effect upon the heart.

I wish that housekeepers would bestow a little more thought, upon their mode of intercourse with domestics. If the contract were less mercenary in its nature, if we considered them as brought under our roof, not merely to perform menial offices, but to be made better, to become sharers in our kind feelings, recipients of our advice, subjects of our moral teachings, partakers in the petitions which daily ascend to the Universal Father, if we more frequently examined our conduct to them, by the test of the Golden Rule, more frequently remembered that for them, as well as for us, "Christ both died, and rose, and revived," we should have the sweet consciousness of having increased their true happiness, as well as our own.

It was not the least, among the virtues of the excellent Lady Elizabeth Hastings, that she considered her servants as humble friends, and strove to elevate their characters. "She presided over her domestics, said her biographer, with the dispositions of a parent. She not only employed the skill of such artificers as were engaged about her house, to consult the comfort and convenience of her servants, that they might suffer no unnecessary hardship, but also provided for the im-

provement of their minds, the decency of their behaviour, and the propriety of manners." If a lady so accomplished, as to have been designated in the writings of Sir Richard Steele, as the "divine Aspasia," the possessor of immense wealth, and a member of the nobility of a royal realm, thus devoted time and tenderness to her servants, why should those who under a republican government profess equality, fear to demean themselves by similar condescension?

Let us lead our domestics to consider the interests of the family as their own. This will lighten the burden of servitude, and make them not only valuable assistants, but friends. Let us take them into our sympathies, as the best way of rendering them deserving of our regard. Then would some of the most formidable cares and ills of housekeeping be stricken off, and mothers have more time for other duties, and more enjoyment in them.

I am persuaded, that they might discharge all that devolves on them, and still persevere in a course of intellectual improvement. One of the most formidable objections to matrimony, and frequently urged by gentlemen who have not entered into its bonds, is, that it puts an end to feminine accomplishment.

A man of the world, and a close observer, once said, "When a lady is married, she seems in

haste to dismiss whatever once rendered her attractive. If she had spent ever so much time, in learning music, she shuts up her piano. If she excelled in painting, she lays aside her pencil. If she had fine manners, she forgets them. She forsakes society. She puts an end to her early friendships. She has no time to write a letter. Ten to one, she grows careless in her dress, and does not reserve even neatness, to comfort her husband. I am myself too sincere an admirer of the sex, to lend a hand in the demolition of all that makes them beautiful." Now, is the opinion of this observing gentleman, truth, or satire? Doubtless, a mixture of both.

Still a part of the censure, may be resolved into praise. That new cares and affections, clustering round a home, should turn the heart from lighter pursuits, and extrinsic pleasures, is natural, if not unavoidable. But this point must be guarded. Nothing that is really valuable ought to escape. The attractions which first won the love of a husband, should be preserved, were it only for that tender remembrance. Friends ought not to be neglected. Correspondences need not be renounced. There are surely some accomplishments which might be retained. Why should our sex, by carelessness or lassitude, throw reproach on a state, for which Heaven has formed them? Do I hear some mother, and

mistress of a family, exclaim "How can I write letters? It is impossible for me to find time to copy them. Besides, I never was an adept in the rules of letter-writing."

"*Time to copy letters!*" Who would think of such a thing? A copied letter, is like a transplanted wild-flower, like a caged bird. Let the writers of formal treatises, copy them as often as they will, and poets dip and re-dip their poems in the fountain of the brain, as deep as Achilles was plunged by his mother, but leave that one little "folio of four pages," free from the "wimples and crisping-pins" of criticism. Shut out, if you will, every star in your literary firmament, that nature and simplicity have enkindled, and tolerate nothing there, but right fashionable drawing-room lamps, yet, leave, I pray you, one single arrow-slit, through which the eye of honest feeling may look unblamed, and let that be the letter, which friend writeth to friend.

"*Rules for letter-writing!*" What rules can it require? We learn to talk without rules, and letter-writing is but to talk upon paper. It seems one of the natural vocations of our sex, for it comes within the province of the heart. It has been somewhere said, that with women, the heart is the citadel, and all beside, the suburbs; but that with men, the heart is only an out-work, whose welfare does not materially affect the prin-

cipal fortress. According to the anatomy of Fontenelle, we have one fibre *more* in the heart, than the other sex, and one *less* in the brain. Possibly, he might have been qualified to excel in dissections of the heart, from the circumstance of being supposed by most of his cotemporaries, to have none of his own.

“*Rules for letter-writing!*” Set up the note-book, before your harpsichord, or piano, but insult not the Eolian harp, with the spectre of a gamut, and leave the rebeck as free as the dancer’s heel. The especial excellence of the epistolary art, is, that as “face answereth to face, in water,” so it causeth heart to answer to heart. Let the ambitious author wrestle as he is able, with the visions of frowning readers that beset his dreams, or shrink beneath the mace of criticism, suspended over him, like the sword of Damocles, but permit us, women, now and then, to escape to some quiet nook, and hold sweet converse with a distant friend. Amid the tavern-meals, which the mind so continually takes, allow it now and then, one solitary repast, upon the simple, sugared viands, that it loved in childhood. Pouring out the thoughts, in the epistolary style, has such power to confer pleasure, to kindle sympathy, to comfort affliction, to counsel inexperience, and to strengthen piety, that it is great cause of regret, when it is entirely laid aside.

Economy of time, and energy of purpose, may so combine domestic and maternal duties, with intellectual improvement, that each department will prosper. We have all of us known some few happy examples of the union of fine social feelings, cherished recollections of friendship, and cultivation of intellect, with all the sacred charities of home. Such was the Empress Eudocia, amid the hindrances and temptations of the luxurious court of Constantinople. She continued to make proficiency, in the branches of knowledge which in youth she had loved. Amid every other employment, or allurement, literature and religion maintained their power over her mind. She composed a poetical paraphrase, of many of the historic and prophetic books of the Bible ; also, of the life of our Saviour, and the writings of some of the fathers. They are mentioned with approbation, by the author of the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire ;" and Europe, in those early ages, saw with surprise, a woman, a wife, a mother and an empress, engaged in researches so unusual, and so profound.

Feeling, as we do, the importance of the station which Heaven has assigned us, let us examine with a vigilant eye, what influence the systems of education which we authorize, are likely to exercise upon its happiness. How are our daughters brought up ? Admitting that mat-

rimony will be their probable destination, is there any adaptation in their habits, tempers and tastes, to the duties of that destination? After the gilding and garniture that adorn its entrance, have become familiar, and the flowers that sprang up at its threshold begin to feel the frost, are they prepared to become rational companions, discreet counsellors, prudent guides, skillful housekeepers, judicious and affectionate mothers? If they have entered hastily, or without counting the cost, this most responsible station, if their acquisitions, whether of music, or drawing, or dancing, or fashionable manners, or personal decoration, or light literature, or the surface of languages, have been made for the sake of display, the very principle on which their education has proceeded, must be reversed, perhaps, eradicated. Will they make this change gracefully, meekly, with happiness to themselves, and those around them? *That is the experiment.* It would be kind in us mothers, not to expose our daughters to hazard, on subjects of such high import. It would be a mercy to ourselves, as well as to them, if we felt assured that they were qualified for the sphere which they have entered.

It would be wise also for daughters to investigate, how far their studies, their pursuits, their daily habits, have any good practical tendency; how many of them must be modified, reformed,

or wholly laid aside, when the duties of life come upon them ; and which of them, are most likely to obstruct, or render irksome, the occupations of maturity.

But, mothers, the weight of this business is with you. Do you desire those whom you educate, to become good housekeepers ? Be so yourselves. Would it grieve you to see them ignorant how to promote the prosperity of their family, careless of their own persons, negligent of their friends, inattentive to the true welfare of their children ? Avoid these errors in your own conduct.

Do you wish them to unite with the faithful performance of every domestic duty, social virtues, and mental attainments ? Shew them the possibility, the beauty of such a combination. Ever keep in mind, that the loftiest teachings, the most eloquent precepts, must lose half their force, without the sanction of *your own example*.

LETTER XV.

OPINION OF WEALTH.

EARLIER than we suppose, children form opinions of those who are around them. They are anxious to know who are good, and how they have earned that distinction. We should be ready to guide their first ideas of what is worthy of praise, or dispraise, for these are the germinations of principle. Let us not inoculate them with the love of money. It is the prevailing evil of our country. It makes us a care-worn people. "I know an American, said a satirical traveller, wherever I meet him, by the perpetual recurrence of the word *dollar*. See, if you can talk with him one hour, and not hear him use it."

Not only does the inordinate desire of wealth, engross conversation, but turn thought from its nobler channels, and infect the mind as with an incurable disease. It moves the ambitious to jealous or fierce competition, and the idle to fraud, and the unprincipled to crime. Ask the keepers of our prisons, what vice peoples many of their cells? They will tell you, the desire to get money without labour. Ask the chaplain of

yonder penitentiary, what crime that haggard man has committed, whom he is toiling to prepare for an ignominious death? He replies, "the love of money, led him to strike at midnight the assassin's blow."

The determination to be rich, when disjoined from honest industry, opens the avenues of sin, and even when connected with it, is dangerous, unless regulated by the self-denying spirit of religion. Allowed to overleap the limits of moderation, it becomes a foe to domestic enjoyment, and uproots the social pleasures and charities of life.

Since then the science of accumulation, is in its abuse destructive, and in its legitimate use unsafe, without the restraint of strict principle, let us not perplex the unfolding mind, with its precepts, or confound it with its combinations. The child hears perpetual conversation about the dearness or cheapness of the articles, with which he is surrounded. Perhaps, the associations which he forms, are not between the furniture and its convenience, between his apparel and its fitness or comfort, but between the quantity of money which they cost, or the adroitness with which the merchant was beaten down. He is interested by frequent remarks from lips that he reveres, about how much, such and such a person is worth; and hears the gradation gravely set-

tled, between neighbour and neighbour. “*Does worth mean goodness?*” inquires the child. “*No. It means money.*” “*Worth makes the man, and want of it the fellow,*” said the ethical poet. But the child coming with his privately amended dictionary, says, “*Money makes the man;*” of course, he whose purse is empty, is less than a man. Some person is spoken of, as possessing distinguished talents. The listening child is prepared to admire, till the clause, “*he can never make a fortune,*” changes his respect to pity or indifference. The piety of another is mentioned, his love of doing good, his efforts to make others better and happier. “*But he is poor.*” Alas, that the forming mind should be left to undervalue those deeds and motives, which in the sight of heaven, are the only true riches.

Possibly, in the freedom of domestic discourse, some lady is censured for vanity or ignorance, for ungrammatical language, or an ill-spelt epistle. But “*she is rich,*” may be the reply, and he sees the extenuation accepted. If he is skillful at drawing inferences, or indisposed to study, he says “*money is an excuse for ignorance, so if I have but little knowledge, it is no matter, if I can only get rich.*” He hears a man spoken of as unkind, or intemperate, or irreligious. He listens for the sentence of blame, that such conduct deserves. “*He is worth five hundred thou-*

sand dollars," is the reply. And there is silence. "Can money excuse sin?" asks the poor child, in silent ruminations.

It is unwarily remarked at the table, "such a young man will be very rich when his father dies." Beware lest that busy casuist arrive at the conclusion, that a parent's death, is not a great affliction if he leaves something behind: that if his possessions are very large, the event may be both contemplated and borne with indifference. Now, though the long teaching of a selfish world may fasten this result on the minds of men, it should never enter the simple sanctuary of a child's heart, displacing the first, holiest affections of nature.

A little girl once heard some conversation in the family about the hiring of a sempstress, and reported it to her sister. "One is very poor, said she, and has an aged mother and two little children to support. The other is not so poor. But she does not ask as much, by several cents a day. I heard it said that she does not work as well. But then she works cheaper, and dresses better. So we have hired her. Yet sister, I felt sorry for the widow with the babies, for she looked sad and pale, and said she had no way to get bread for them, but her needle. I was afraid they would cry to be fed, and that the lame grand-mother would suffer." The sister who had lived longer

in this world of calculation, said "it is perfectly right to hire her, who asks the least, because it saves money."

Now, my dear friends, is it not both unkind and hazardous thus to puzzle the moral sense of our children? to leave them to believe that wealth is both an excuse for ignorance and a shelter for vice? that it is but another name for virtue? that for the want of it, neither talent or piety can atone? that it is right to desire the death of a relative to obtain it? or to grind the face of the poor to save it? How could the most inveterate enemy injure them so directly and permanently, as by making their earliest system of ethics a contradiction and a solecism? Yet this is done by the conversation and example of parents, who love them as their own souls.

Of what effect is it, that we repeat to them in grave lectures on Sundays, that they must "lay up for themselves treasures in heaven," when they can see us, the other six days toiling after, and coveting only "treasures on earth?" When we tell them that they must not "value the gold that perisheth," neither "love the world, nor the things of the world," if they weigh the precepts with our illustration of them, will they not think that we mean to palm on them, what we disregard ourselves, and despise our cunning? or else that we assert what we do not believe, and so distrust our sincerity?

It is indeed necessary, where the subsistence of a family is to be acquired, that much attention and industry should be employed. Parents must often confer together, on items of expense, and understand each other in every point of economy. But these consultations may surely be so managed, as not to absorb the thoughts of their offspring. It is not necessary that they monopolize all the discourse at the fireside, or that the domestic board be turned into an exchange-table, or that the child of a few summers be made a sharper.

Mothers, you surely need not be straitened for subjects of communion, with the pupils whom you are to prepare for Eternity. You can teach them from history and from observation, the possibility of being respectable without riches, or discontented with them. You can impress on them from a Book Divine, that to gain the whole world, would not balance one sigh of a lost soul.

Years and intercourse with mankind will soon enough, impress the lesson of pecuniary acquisition. You need not post in advance of the world, with the world's lessons. It is not expected that you should erect the "tables of the money-changers, and seats for those who sell doves," in the temple of those hearts, which might at least for a few of their tenderest years, be consecrated to "Nature's sweet affections and to God."

LETTER XVI.

HOSPITALITY.

CHILDREN are in some measure educated by the style of parental hospitality. They are naturally gregarious, and the expansion of the social principle gives them pleasure. They receive the strongest impressions through their senses, and there is a consent of the senses, in the satisfaction which awaits the coming of a guest. The cheerful preparation which they see, the agreeable additions to the table, the putting on of the best robe, the smiling face of the welcomed friend, the kind words addressed to them, cause their little hearts to swell with delight. Neither is this sharing of their good things with others, an inert precept in moral regimen. It fosters a simple form of benevolence, and helps to extirpate those lesser plants of selfishness, which are prone to a quick growth, in the moist, rich soil of infancy.

Children sometimes see their parents extending the rites of hospitality, to the sick friend, or the sorrowful stranger, and they imbibe that class of deeper sympathies, which flow forth towards

the homeless and the poor. Nor are the lessons of love, to their race, thus learned, of little value. The happiness which they feel from seeing others happy, is better than that which they derive from solitary acquisition. The pleasure thus reflected from the smile of a guest, is one of the rudiments of benevolence.

Permit your young children, therefore, whenever it is proper, to share the warmth of an unceremonious hospitality. For this reason, as well as for others, still more important, be strenuous to secure for them the privileges of a *home*. The custom, so prevalent in our larger cities, of abandoning housekeeping, and becoming lodgers either in public hotels, or private families, is fraught with evils. When such an arrangement is the result of necessity, it should be submitted to, like any other form of adversity. But if parents could, by any additional economy, or increase of personal exertion, maintain their own table, and family-altar, they should do it for the sake of their little ones. However small may be the nest, where their new-fledg'd offspring are nurtured, no matter, if they can only brood over it with their own wing. Under the roof of another, the husband and father, can neither command the respect, or exercise the authority which are his prerogatives, nor the wife exhibit before those who fashion themselves after her model, the full

beauty and energy, of conjugal and maternal example. But especially are young children restrained in their freedom and happiness, and compelled to feel somewhat of the melancholy distrust of strangers and exiles. Instead of being cheered by seeing their parents, like the fixed stars, diffusing blessings to the remotest satellite, they behold them like wandering planets, seeking light and heat from others, or perhaps, like comets, whose true rotation has never been calculated, careering through and perplexing other systems.

It is indeed most desirable that little children should enjoy the comforts of a home, and share the cordial of true hospitality. But it is almost equally desirable, that they should be sheltered from that ostentatious and heartless intercourse which fashion authorizes. Every entrance of it under their own roof, interferes with their accommodation and quiet. Parents and domesticks are absorbed in preparations which to them are mysteries. The access of ornaments, the array of fashionable garniture, the heaping together of luxuries, are not for them. The attention of those whom they love, is turned away, or monopolized by objects which they cannot understand. They shrink back to their nurseries, dispirited and forsaken. Perhaps they expend upon each other, their heightened consciousness

of unhappiness, while the ruling minds that should regulate their tempers, are elsewhere.

Yet this is but the lighter shade of the evil. Imagine them exposed, as it sometime happens, to the excitement of the scene. If the party is not very large, mother consents that they should just appear. Now, here is a new and wonderful happiness. The little casuists, are busy to know in what it consists. Varied and splendid costumes strike their eye. Ah! fine dress must be happiness. Will they henceforth be more content with their own simple garb, or more likely to esteem humble virtue, in plain attire? They see many rich viands. These are surely a species of happiness. Their appetites are solicited, either to be repelled, or to be indulged at the expense of health and simplicity of taste. If they have been adorned and exhibited for the occasion, they will be familiarized to the dangerous nutriment of flattery. "How pretty!" "what beautiful creatures!" will be the exclamations of the unthinking, or of the sycophants who wish to ingratiate themselves with the parents. The little wondering heart lifts up its valve, and receives the stimulant. Its humility, and chastened resolves are put to flight. Affectation and admiration of self, prematurely enter. The tare is not only *among* the wheat, but *before* it. If the little beings have not forfeited their frankness, ten to

one but you may hear, in words, as well as in conduct, "I don't love to do as I am told, nor to get my lesson, and it is no matter, for I am sure that Pam a pretty, and a beautiful creature."

But the principle of display is not more destructive to the natural and happy simplicity of childhood, than the routine of fashionable visiting to the welfare of true hospitality. The more artificial, and ostentatious we become, the farther we recede from that hospitality which Reason sanctions as a virtue, and the voice of Inspiration enjoins as a duty. In ancient times it flourished like a vigorous plant. Beneath its branches, the traveller found shelter from the noon-day sun, and covert from the storm.

Yet, in proportion as nations have advanced in refinement, they have neglected its culture. They may indeed, have hedged it about with ceremonies, or encumbered it with trappings. But its verdure has been suffered to fade, and its root to perish. Like the stripling-shepherd, it has drooped beneath the gorgeous armour of royalty. Among the smooth stones of the brook, it would better have found the defence that it needed.

Under the oak at Mamre, it sat with the patriarch, and entertained angels. It lingered amid oriental climes, as in a congenial atmosphere, and has never utterly forsaken the tent of the

wandering Arab. With a cowled head, it shrouded itself in cloisters, and for ages, neither pilgrim, or mendicant, touched the bell at the convent-gate, in vain. The chosen people in the infancy of their nation, revered its injunctions, for they were twined with the most tender and thrilling recollections, and fortified by a command from Jehovah : “ The Lord our God loveth the stranger ; *love ye* therefore the stranger, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

The Moslem, amid his ferocity and despotism, regards the rites of hospitality. He expresses his sense of the solemnity of its requisitions, by the proverb anciently incorporated with his language, “ when the stranger saith *alas!* the heart of Allah is wounded.” Some uncivilized nations have offered a rude homage at its shrine. The roving tribes of the North American forests, spread their only blanket for the stranger’s bed. They set before him the last morsel of food, though their households are in danger of famine. When the Old World paid its first visit to the New, the Mexicans saluted the men of Spain with clouds of fragrant incense, not knowing how soon it was to be quenched in their own blood. The modern South-American republics, still welcome their guests with the simple offering of a fresh flower.

Most of the refined nations of our own times, entrust the usages of hospitality to the keeping

of the gentler sex. Especially, in this new Western World, the household gods, those Lares and Penates of the Romans, are cordially entrusted to our care. Elevated as we now are, by intellectual advantages, beyond all previous example, it might rationally be expected, that a degree of lustre and dignity, heretofore unknown, would dignify social intercourse. Still, we see it very prominently identified with the pleasures of the table. To make the satisfactions of the palate, the principal tests of hospitality, seems to accord with a less refined state of society, or to augur some destitution of intellectual resource. Would our ladies set the example of less elaborate entertainments, of less exuberant feasting, more room would be left for the mental powers to expand, and the feelings to seek interchange, in conversation. At least, they might save their husband's purses, their servants' tempers, and themselves a world of fatigue. Let them recollect that it is but a relick of barbarism which they cherish, when they allure their guests to indulgence of appetite, perhaps to hurtful excess. For temptations of the palate, though they may be multiplied by the hospitable lady, out of pure benevolence, cannot be yielded to with impunity, by all whom her invitations thus expose. Her skill in culinary compounds may wound the health of those whom she best loves. It would be but

a sorry compliment, for the dyspeptic husband, to murmur forth, like him of Eden, his sad extenuation, “the woman whom thou gavest to be with me, gave me and I did eat:” or for the more indignant guest, when seeking his physician, to exclaim, “the serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.”

It was formerly too much the custom, to press among the pledges of hospitality, the draught that inebriates. More light, and a better creed, have modified this practice. But still it is not extinct. If it be asked why the christian inhabitants of a most christian land, should choose as the interpreter of their hospitality, an usage more dangerous than the sword of Damocles, there is no better answer than “*because it is the fashion.*” The cup will not indeed, mark him who partakes, with its immediate poison, but may it not foster what shall rankle in his veins, with fatal contagion, threatening not only the body, but the soul?

When philosophers have inquired, how woman whose happiness and safety are so deeply involved in the purity of those around, could thus dare to trouble the fountains of temperance and of virtue, the only reply has been “*it is the fashion.*” Holy men, the guardians of God’s altar, have demanded, why she hath been thus faithless to her trust. And she hath answered, “*it is the fashion.*” But when the garniture is stripped from all earthly

things, when that dread assembly is convened, where none will dare to plead the omnipotence of *fashion*, when a voice from the Throne of the Eternal, questions of the plague-spot upon the soul of the guest, the brother, the husband, or the child, *what shall the response be?*

LETTER XVII.

RESPECT TO AGE.

IT is one proof of a good education, and of refinement of feeling, to respect antiquity. Sometimes, it seems the dictate of unsophisticated nature. We venerate a column, which has withstood the ravages of time. We contemplate with reverence the ivy-crown'd castle, through which the winds of centuries make melancholy musick. We gather with care, the fragments of the early history of nations, which however mouldering or disjointed, have escaped the shipwreck of time. There are some who spare no expense in collecting coins and relics, which rust has penetrated, or change of customs rendered valueless, save as they have within them the voice of other years. Why then should we regard with indifference, the living remnants of a former age, those ambassadors whom the Old World sends to commune with the New, through whose experience, we might both be enriched and made better?

The sympathy of a kind heart, prompts respect to the aged. Their early and dear friends have departed. They stand alone, with heads whiten-

ed and vigour diminished. They have escaped the deluge that overwhelmed their cotemporaries. But they have not passed unscathed, through the water-floods of time. Tender and marked attentions are due to those weary voyagers. They ought not to be left as the denizens of some solitary isle, where love never visits, and which the gay vessels newly launched on the sea of life, pass by, with flaunting streamers, and regard not. The tribute of reverence which is their due, adds as much to the honour of him who pays, as to the happiness of those who receive it.

Respect to Age, is best impressed on children, by the example of their parents, who should daily exhibit a transcript of the reverent deportment they require them to evince. If their own parents are living, they have the best of all possible opportunities to teach that kind observance of word, look and manner, that assiduity to promote comfort, that tenderness in concealing infirmity, that skill to anticipate the unspoken wish, that zeal to repay some small part of the countless debt incurred in life's earliest years, which they themselves would desire to receive, should they live to become old.

How often do we see disrespect to parents, visited with evils in this life. We might infer it from the language of the fifth commandment, which in promising a reward to those who honour

their parents, implies that the punishment of those who withhold that honour, will be equally palpable. The natural progress of events leads also to such a result. From a principle of imitation, the child frames his manners on the model which his parents sanction. Their mode of treatment to their own parents, is perpetuated in him. The neglect or reverence which their daily conduct exhibits, becomes incorporated with his own habits and character, baleful dispositions reproduce themselves: so that what is counted as a judgment, may be but the spontaneous action of a bitter root, bearing its own fruit. Yet it is not surprizing, that the Almighty who has not utterly disjoined the thread of retribution from the web of this brief life, should punish visibly and fearfully, the sin of disobedience to parents. Without dwelling at this time, on so heinous a dereliction of a most sacred duty, let us turn to the interesting subject of reverence to age.

The universal opinion of those, who scrutinize the state of society in our country, is, that in the treatment of the aged, there is a diminution of respect. Even the authority of parents, and teachers, seems to be borne with uneasiness, and to be early shaken off. Those, whose memory comprises two generations, assert, that most palpably in these points, the former days were better than these.

Some have supposed this change, naturally to arise from the spirit and institutions of a republick. Equality of rank, destroys many of the barriers of adventitious distinction. But the hoary head, when crowned with goodness and piety, is an order of nobility, established by God himself. It marks a stage of ripened excellence, ready for admission among the "just made perfect." If deficiency in duty to those who have attained such illustrious distinction, is so obvious, as to mark the character of a whole generation, it must be traced to the structure of families, rather than to the form of our government. Reverence for Age, being a divine command, should form an inseparable part of the earliest christian education. It must be inculcated with the rudiments of religion, when the mind is in its forming state. It seems inexplicable that parents should neglect to impress on their children the solemn injunction, "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the Lord." The command derives force, from the situation in which it is placed, guarded by the majesty of Him from whom it emanates, and linked with the duty, which man owes to his Maker, and his Judge.

It is rather a surprizing fact, that some heathen nations should have been more exemplary in

their treatment of the aged, than those who enjoy moral and religious culture: that the dim teachings of nature should be more operative among ignorant men, than the "clear shining of the Sun of Righteousness," upon those who believe the gospel.

The Spartans, so proudly adverse to every form of delicacy and refinement, paid marked deference to age, especially when combined with wisdom. A fine tribute to their observance of this virtue, was rendered them by the old man, who having been refused a seat in a crowded assembly at Athens, saw the rougher Lacedemonians rise, in an equally dense throng, and reverently make room for him: "the Athenians *know* what is right, but the Spartans *practise* it."

The wandering sons of the American forests, shewed the deepest respect to years. Beneath each lowly roof, at every council-fire, the young listened reverently to the voice of the aged. In their most important exigences, the boldest warriors, the haughtiest chieftains, consulted the hoary-headed men, and waited for their words. Their deportment illustrated the assertion of the friend of Job, "I am young, and ye are old: therefore I was afraid to show you my opinion."

The reverent regard, accorded to length of days, by the rude natives of these western wilds, resembled in some measure that which was evin-

ced by the chosen people of old; as if those wandering tribes preserved in their own habitations, the smothered embers of the fires, swept from the altars of Zion. Dwelling as we do, in the regions from whence they were exiled, exhumeing with our plough-shares the very bones from their fathers' sepulchres, uttering daily in the names of our rivers and mountains, the dialect of a race driven away as an exhalation when the sun ariseth, it would surely have been well, that in this one respect, their spirit had remained among us; or at least, that their example had not been to our reproach.

If we admit that there is a general declension in duty to the aged, and if it must be traced to error in domestic culture, heads of families are responsible for the evil.

Mothers, is not much of the fault at our own doors? If so, where is the remedy? Must it not be sought in the power of early instruction, and in the influence of example? Is there as fair a prospect of success in admonishing those who have been long in error, as in forming correct habits for the yet uncontaminate?

Begin then with your little ones. Require them to rise and offer a seat, when an old person enters the room, never to interrupt them when speaking, but to solicit their advice, and reverence their opinions. You will say that these are sim-

ple rules. Yes. But the oak springs from a diminutive germ. Show them the reason for even these simple rules, in the book of God. Consider the slightest disrespect to aged relatives, or any person advanced in years, as a fault of magnitude. If you have yourself a parent, or a surviving friend of that parent, make your own respectful deportment, a mirror by which they can fashion their own. Confirm these habits, until they obtain a permanent root in principle, and determine that your own offspring shall not swell the number of those who disregard the divine precept to "honour the hoary head."

I was acquainted with the father and mother of a large family, who on the entrance of their own aged parents, rose and received them with every mark of respect, and also treated their contemporaries, as the most distinguished guests. Their children, beholding continually this deference shown to the aged, made it a part of their own conduct. Before they were capable of comprehending the reasons on which it was founded, they copied it from the ever-open page of parental example. The beautiful habit grew with their growth. It was rewarded by the approbation of all who witnessed it. Especially was it cheering to the hearts of those who received it, and who found the chill and solitude of the vale

of years, alleviated by the tender love that walked by their side.

I saw the same children when their own parents became old. This hallowed principle, early incorporated with their character, bore a rich harvest for those who had sown the seed. The honour which from infancy they had shown to the hoary head, mingling with the fervour of filial affection, produced a delightful combination; one, which even to the casual observer, had an echo of that voice from heaven, "train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

LETTER XVIII.

HAPPINESS.

IT was a pleasant theory of an ancient musician, that the “soul was but a harmony.” However erroneous the philosophy may be, it furnishes a profitable hint. The habit of eliciting from the discord of opposing circumstances, a song of praise, is of inestimable value. It was said of Klopstock, the German poet, that his “mind maintained a perpetual spring, a never-failing succession of beauty and of fragrance ; if the rose wounded him, he gathered the lily, if the lily died on his bosom, he cherished the myrtle.” Such affinity had this temperament with buoyancy of spirits, and a perpetual flow of the freshness of life, that even when the snows of fourscore years had settled upon his brow, he was designated by the epithet of the “*youth forever.*”

This harmony of our nature with the tasks that are appointed it, is not only peculiarly graceful in woman, but in a measure necessary to the complete fulfillment of her destiny. In her capacity of wife and mother, she is the keeper of the happiness of others. Can she be worthy of such

high trust, unless she is able to be the keeper of her own? She is expected to be a comforter. But how can this be, unless the materials of her own character, are well-balanced, and combined? She is expected to add brightness to the fire-side. Can she do this, unless the principle of light is inherent? She is expected to be as a sunbeam on the cloud, the bow of promise amid the storms of life. Therefore, the foundation of her own happiness, must be above the region of darkness, and tempest.

The desire of happiness, is implanted in all created beings. Its capacities are capable of cultivation, and extension, beyond what at first view would be imagined. The means by which it may be attained and imparted, should be studied as a science, especially by that sex, whose ministry is among those affections which make or mar the music of the soul.

A mind ever open to the accession of knowledge, may be numbered among the elements of happiness. The free action of intellect, as well as the due exercise of the muscular powers, promotes the health and harmony of the system. "Knowledge, says Lord Bacon, is an *impression of pleasure*, and the application thereof, ought to bring unto us repose, and contentment."

The cultivation of friendship, and of the social affections, should be assiduously regarded. If,

according to the definition of an ancient philosopher, "happiness be the sharing of pleasure and pain with another," it is less important to try to escape the evils of this life of trial, than to learn the art of dividing them.

A habit of looking on the bright side of character, and of finding excuses for error, is conducive to happiness. It is a branch of benevolence, which every day gives opportunity to exercise. It is of the same kindred with that spirit of piety, which expatiates on the blessings of providence, and delights to select themes of discourse from those mercies which are "new every morning, and fresh every moment."

The most disinterested, have the best materials for being happy. They are seen forgetting their own sorrows, that they may console those of others. May it not therefore be assumed that the subjugation of self, is happiness?

The lineaments of cheerfulness, are important. A smiling brow, and a pleasant toned voice, are adjuncts of happiness. A wife is not always aware, how much her husband may be thus cheered, when he returns harrassed by the perplexities of business, perhaps, soured by intercourse with harsh and unfriendly spirits. She should spare to add to his secret burdens, the irritation of her own repinings. Household inconveniences, though they may be great to her, are apt to appear to

him, as the “small dust of the balance.” It is not wise to choose them as the subjects of discourse, except where his counsel or decision, are imperatively needed. It is sweet to a wife to feel that she is regarded as

“ The light and music of a happy home.
It was her smile that made the house so gay,
Her voice that made it eloquent with joy,
Her presence peopled it. Her very tread
Had life and gladness in it.”

But if the lineaments of happiness are so beautiful in a wife, they are still more indispensable to a mother. The little child opens the door of its heart to the kind tone, the smiling brow, the eye looking above this world, to a brighter sun. Especially while engaged in teaching her little ones, let the mother preserve every symbol of cheerfulness ; the mild manner, the gentle word, the tender caress. Love and knowledge entering in together, form a happy and hallowed alliance. We are scarcely aware, how much little children admire pleasant faces.

“ My children, said a widowed father, our circle has been long desolate. I hope ere long to be able to present you with a new mother. You must all promise me to love her.” Pleasure was visible on every countenance. A new Mother ! It was a delightful idea to their affectionate hearts. They shouted forth their joy. Soon,

one of the most favoured of the number, a boy of a sweet spirit, climbed his father's knee. "Please to choose for us, a mother who will *laugh*. And we would all like it well, if you would bring us one that knows how to *play*." There spoke forth the free, happy nature of childhood.

Christians ought to be happy, and being so, should make it visible. The words and example of our Saviour, convey this lesson. "When ye fast, be ye not of a sad countenance." If even the penitential parts of our religion, do not allow this demeanour, can faith, and hope, and joy require it?

Every woman in advancing the happiness of her family, should look beyond the gratification of the present moment, and consult their ultimate improvement. She should require all the members of her household, to bear their part towards this end. The little child, too young to contribute aught beside, may bring the gift of a smile, the charm of sweet manners. The kiss of the rose-lipp'd babe, enters into the account. The elder children should select from their studies, or from the books they are perusing, some portion to relate, which will administer to general information, or rational amusement. All, according to their means, should be taught to swell the stock of happiness.

Mistakes are sometimes made, with regard to the nature of happiness. I knew a mother, replete with benevolence, and the soul of affection. She found her husband and children, made happy by the pleasures of the palate. Her life was devoted to that end. Elegance, and unending variety, characterized her table. Her invention was taxed, her personal labour often put in requisition, for efforts to which the genius of her servants was unequal. She loved the glowing smile that repaid her toils. The motive was affectionate; what were its results? In some, conviviality, in others gluttony, in all a preference of sense to spirit.

Another mother, wished to make a family of beautiful daughters happy. She encouraged the gay amusements in which youth delights. Expensive dresses, and rich jewelry were found necessary. She could not bear to see her daughters outshone, and mortified. She taxed the purse of her husband, beyond its capacity, and contrary to his judgment. Her principal argument was, "I know, you love to see our young people happy." Her theory of happiness, ended in a spirit of display, a necessity of excitement, a habit of competition, a ruinous extravagance.

If we would advance the true felicity of others, we must not only know in what it consists, but must also be happy ourselves. Let us remember

that we must give account at last, for our happiness, as well as for any other sacred deposite. A capacity for it, has been given us; how have we improved it? Have we suffered it to grow inert, or morbid?

A cup was put into our hands, capable of containing the bright essences, which this beautiful creation yields. Have we allowed it to be filled with tears? have we dampened its chrystal surface with perpetual sighs?

The flowers of affection were sown along our path. Did we gratefully inhale them, or complain that weeds sometimes mingled with them, that the roses were not without thorns, that the fairest and purest, were never exempt from mildew and frost and death?

If we are so happy as at last to arrive at heaven, and some reproving seraph at its gate, should ask why we came mourning or repining along our pilgrim-path, and assure us that the dispositions of that blessed clime ought to have been cultivated below, that joy and praise were the elements of its atmosphere, how earnestly should we wish that the whole of our life had been a preparation for that Eternity of love, and that we had travelled thither with a countenance always radiant, "an everlasting hymn within our souls."

LETTER XIX.

ADVERSITY.

To bear the evils and sorrows which may be appointed us, with a patient mind, should be the continual effort of our sex. It seems, indeed, to be expected of us ; since the passive and enduring virtues, are more immediately within our province.

Let us, dear friends, when all is fair and bright around us, meditate on the *uses of affliction*, and thus like the “armourer accomplishing the knight,” be in some measure girded for its approach. None are exempted from the visitations of disappointment and sorrow. All should be made better by them. Every one kindles a flame, which might help to melt the dross of selfishness, or consume our inordinate love of the world ; and their ashes, were we more faithful in such husbandry, would quicken the germination of that holy seed, whose ripened fruit is for a better world.

We cannot perceive, that an unbroken course of prosperity is favourable to devotion. Sloth, pride, and want of sympathy for the woes of others, are too often its attendants. It might

seem an anomaly to say, that a superabundance of gifts, from the Author of all our mercies should induce forgetfulness of him. And yet, does not our observation of human nature show, that the poorest are often the most thankful for slight bounty? that the habitual sufferer is prone to the deepest devotion? that those on whom little has been bestowed, engrave the name of the Giver, most legibly upon the living-stone of their hearts?

A poor inhabitant of the northern isles of Scotland, left for the first time the rugged shore of St. Kilda, where in the dark cabin of his father he had been nurtured, as the arctick pine, amid the crevices of the rock. When the boat approached the coast of Mull, he gazed with wonder, as on an unbounded hemisphere. A passenger mocked the simple-hearted man, with tales of the magnificence which reigned there. He also ridiculed the poverty of St. Kilda. The son of the rock, listened in silence. If he felt the caustick, he forbore to retaliate. At length the officious narrator said, "heard ye ever of God, in that bleak island of St. Kilda?"

"From whence came you?" inquired the taciturn and grave Highlander.

"O, from a beauteous land where the fields give us wheat before we ask for it, where rich fruits make the air fragrant, and honey fills every flower."

“Came ye from so fair a land? Man, might forget God there. In my own St. Kilda he never can. Building his home on a rock, suspended over a precipice, chilled by the wintry wind, tossed on the wild ocean, *he never can forget his God.* No, he hangs every moment on his arm.”

Where man shall turn for solace in adversity, has been his earnest inquiry, ever since he was placed upon the earth. Since his expulsion from Paradise, he has ever had seasons of wandering and of woe, “seeking rest, and finding none.”

Nature prompts the sorrowful to repose upon some kindred spirit, to lay part of their burden, upon the nearest in friendship or affection. Yet there are evils, which the most perfect union of hearts, cannot alleviate. The perpetual sadness of a broken spirit, is beyond the reach of external intercourse. Indeed, the most incurable evils, sometimes spring from the closest affinities. The parent may be doomed to see the child, in whom his proudest hopes were garnered up, smite down those hopes and trample their roots, though they grew in the “deep of his heart.” Will friendship comfort him? The wife may find the idol of her love, the victim of vice, or estranged from her as an enemy. What remaining affection can fill the void in her soul? Bereavements may be so bitter and entire, that none shall be left to comfort the lonely survivor. The poor

chieftain of the forest, was not left without a parallel, when he exclaimed in his desolation "who is there to mourn for Logan? *Not one.*"

Still the question returns, where shall we look for solace, under such adversities as transcend the help of man? The poetry of Philosophy replies, that *Time* is the physician of grief. We see that he is so for common losses, or for those that more immediately affect the passions. But are there not afflictions, whose extent is made more evident by the lapse of years? where the tempest of sorrow indeed abates, but where the waste of comfort, the desolation of hope, the impossibility of restitution, only become more apparent? To such, Time acts only as a torch-bearer, revealing the extent of a ruin, which he has no power to repair. He may indeed, cause the tide of weeping to roll back, but it is to discover the magnitude of the wreck, the multitude of precious things thrown over in the storm, fragments of treasure, which the tantalizing surge displays for a moment, and then swallows up forever.

Time may indeed, be a successful physician for the sorrows of youth. Then, the buoyant heart voluntarily co-operates with any sanitary regimen. It is fruitful in substitutes for lost delights. In its vigorous policy, it scarcely waits for Time to aid in repairing the breaches in its sanctuary. Then, when its tendrils are stricken from one

prop, how soon are they seen clasping another, and covering it with blossoms.

Far otherwise is it, in the wane of life. The heart, often bruised, often smitten, clings with a more rigid grasp to its diminishing joys. As the circle grows narrower, it struggles to spread itself over the whole of it, to touch and to guard every point. But the pilgrim of many lustrums, cannot hope to call forth in young bosoms, the reciprocity which the fervour of his own prime enkindled. Between him and them "is a great gulf fixed." The affections lose the power of re-production. They have no longer that Promethean fire, by which dead elements are quickened into friendship. The path of life has become to them, as the "valley of dry bones." They wander through it, without the ability to bid one skeleton arise, and be clothed with flesh. They become too inert, to enchain even the living and willing objects that surround them. Like the ruminating animals, they slumber over the food, which once they pursued, as the fleet roe-buck upon the mountains.

It is possible also, that with years, a kind of hallowed jealousy may steal over the soul. Perhaps it may refuse to admit new imagery to a shrine, where its earliest chosen, longest-consecrated idols dwelt, and were worshipped. With a morbid, yet blameless constancy, it may her-

metically seal the vase, where its first, purest odours had birth and were exhaled.

Therefore, the medical influence of Time, at its highest power, ranks only as a sedative. It cannot extirpate those roots of sorrow, which strike to the extremest verge of human life. Especially will the hoary-headed, if they trust Time as their sole physician, find him stupifying their senses with a transient opiate, but leaving the heart's wounds to rankle and rankle, till, like the bereaved patriarch, they "go down into the grave, to the lost one, mourning."

The inquiry still recurs, where shall we turn, under the deepest calamities, that are appointed to humanity? A sterner philosophy than that at first quoted, answers "rise above them, be insensible to them." "Oh, but man is too frail and sensitive, too much wrapped up in a net-work of nerves, and too faint at heart, to stand against the dread artillery of woe. A baleful wind sweeps away his strength; a frown on the face of one he loves, drinks up his spirit; the fickle breath of the populace inflates him; the dew-drops in his broken cistern dry up, and he is in bitterness; fever touches his clay-temple, and he is gone. He who cannot cope with the feeblest agent, is expected to stand unmelted in the "seven-times heated furnace." He cannot resist the elements: how can he endure the wrath of their Omnipotent

Ruler, when he “ariseth to shake terribly the earth?”

That remedy for adversity, which neither the light of nature discovered, nor the pharmacopeia of Time contained, of which Philosophy both in its poetry and its stoicism has failed, is contained in a single prescription of the Gospel, the *submission of our will, to that which is divine*. How simply is it illustrated in the aspiration of Thomas a Kempis. “Give me what thou wilt, and in what measure, and at what time thou wilt. Do with me what thou knowest to be best, what best pleaseth thee. Place me where thou wilt, freely dispose of me in all things.”

Still more concisely was it expressed by Fenelon, “I am silent; I offer myself in sacrifice; henceforth, I have no will, save to accomplish thine:” but ah, how much more forcibly in that agonizing sigh from Gethsemane, “*not my will, but thine be done*,” when even the strengthening angel was astonished, and Earth trembled as she tasted the first trickling drops of her Redeemer’s blood.

LETTER XX.

LOSS OF CHILDREN.

To bear the loss of children with submission, requires the strong exercise of a christian's faith. It seems to contradict the course of nature, that the young and blooming should descend to the tomb, before the aged and infirm. We expect to see the unfolding of a bud which we have watched till it had burst its sheath, trembling with joy and beauty, as it first met the sunbeam. "These same shall comfort us, concerning all our toil," is the voice in the heart of every parent, who contemplates the children, for whom he has laboured and prayed.

The death of a babe, creates no common sorrow. Even the burial of one that has never breathed, brings a keen pang to a parent's heart. The political economist, who estimates the value of every being, by the strength of his sinews, or the gain which he is capable of producing to the community, views the removal of infancy, as but the wiping away of "the small dust from the balance." But he has not, like the mother, knelt and wept over its vacant cradle, stretched out his

arms at midnight for its pliant form, and found only emptiness, listened in vain for its little quiet breathing, and felt his heart desolate. The scales in which a mother weighs her treasures, are not the same in which the man of the world weighs his silver and gold. Her grief is often most poignant, for the youngest and faintest blossom. Thus feeling anguish, where others scarcely see cause for regret, has she not an opportunity more permanently to benefit by the discipline of Heaven? Is she not moved to deeper sympathy with all who mourn? Is she not better fitted to become a comforter? more strongly incited to every deed of mercy? When she sees a little coffin pass, no matter whether the mother who mourns, be a stranger, or a mendicant, or burnt dark beneath an African sun, is she not to her, in the pitying thrill of that moment, as a sister?

Yet is it not alone in the quickening of sympathy, or the excitement to benevolence, that such deep afflictions bring gain to the sufferer. Other seeds of goodness are sown in the softened soil. The thoughts and affections are drawn upward. The glorified spirit of the infant, is as a star to guide the mother to its own blissful clime. Is it not her wish to be where her babe is? - And will she not strive to prepare herself for its pure society? If the cares or sins of earth, ever threaten

to gain the victory, will she not see its little hand reaching from the skies, and be guided by the cherub voice which implores, "Oh mother come to me."

Sometimes, grief loses itself in gratitude, that those who once called forth so much solicitude, are free from the hazards of this changeful life. Here, temptations may foil the strongest, and sins overshadow those, whose opening course was most fair. From all such dangers, the early smitten, the "lambs whom the Saviour taketh untask'd, untried," have forever escaped. To be sinless, and at rest, is a glorious heritage. Sorrow hath no more dominion over them. No longer may they be racked with pain, or pale with weakness, or emaciated by disease. No longer will their dove-like moaning distress the friend watching by their sleepless couch, nor the parent's shudder with untold agony to find that they have no power to sooth the last fearful death-groan. We, who still bear the burdens of a weary pilgrimage, who have still to meet the pang of disease, and to struggle ere we pay our last debt to the destroyer, cherish as our strongest consolation, the hope of entering that peaceful haven which they have already attained.

How affecting was the resignation of the poor Icelandick mother: "Four children were given me. Two are with me, and two with God.

Those who are with God are the happiest. I do not feel troubled about them. I am only anxious that those who remain with me, may so live, that by and by, they may be with him too."

"The most lovely and promising of my children, have been smitten, said a mourning parent. If it were not so, I could have borne it better." But did not the very goodness and piety, which endeared them to you, render them more fit to be companions of the pure spirits around the Throne? Their virtues, their loveliness, seem indeed to have made your loss the greater. But would you have had them less virtuous, less lovely? You do not grudge, that the gift should have been in some degree worthy of Him who resumed it. Oh no! You cannot regret that their fair promise of excellence was unclouded, when they went down to the dust.

I once saw a sight, mournful, yet beautiful. Twin infants, in the same coffin. Their waxen brows had been so much alike, that only the eye of domestick intimacy could distinguish them. One, was suddenly wounded by a dart from those countless diseases, which are in ambush around the first years of life. The other moaned, and cried, incessantly for his companion. Nothing could divert or sooth him. But Death united them. So soon did the survivor sicken, that his brother waited for him in the coffin. There were

bright rose-buds in their little hands, as they slumbered, side by side. Together they had entered the gate of life, and at the gate of death were scarcely divided. When after the silent lapse of time, the mother was able to speak of her bereavement with composure, she said that from among the sources whence she had derived comfort, was the thought that they would be *always together*. While in their health and beauty, she had sometimes anxiously contemplated those many changes and adversities, which might divide their path from each other, "far as the poles apart," and possibly estrange those hearts, which like kindred drops, Nature seemed to have melted into one.

Surely, the thought of the indissoluble union of their dear ones, must be a consolation to afflicted parents. Here, they met but to part again. There, they are to be forever with the Lord. Here, they must sometimes have left home, and been among strangers. Then, what anxieties disturb the parental bosom, lest they might be sick, and need care or comfort, in error or heaviness, and suffer for counsel, and sympathy. But they are where nothing hurtful can intrude. No longer they feel the timidity of strangers. They are at home in the house of their Father. A family broken up on earth, re-assembled in Heaven. Those who dwelt for a little time in the same tent of clay,

are gathered together, around the altar of immortality.

We sometimes see parents suddenly bereft of all their children. To have their most precious treasures swept utterly away, and find that home desolate, which was wont to resound with the voice of young affection, and the tones of innocent mirth, is a sorrow which none can realize, save those who bear it. All human sympathies fall short of the occasion. The admonition not to mourn, is misplaced. "*Jesus wept.*" Is not this a sufficient sanction for the mourner's tear? He who appoints such discipline, never intended that we should be insensible to it, or that we should gird ourselves in the armour of pride to meet it, or seal up the fountain of tears, when he maketh the heart soft.

If we attempt to comfort those, who lament the extinction of an whole family, cut down in their tender years, what shall we say? We are constrained to acknowledge that earth has no substitute for such a loss. Dear afflicted friends, ask it not of earth, but look to Heaven. Is not the interval of separation short? How soon will the years fleet, ere you lie down to slumber in the same narrow bed appointed for all the living. If they died in the Redeemer, and you live in obedience to his commands, how rapturous will be the everlasting embrace in which you shall

enfold them. Can you pourtray, can you even imagine that meeting in heaven?

You will not then, become a prey to despondence, though loneliness broods over your dwelling, when you realize that its once cherished inmates have but gone a little in advance, to those mansions which the Saviour hath prepared for all who love him. Can you not sometimes find it in your hearts to bless God that your loss is the gain of your children? While they were here below, it was your chief joy to see them happy. Yet you were not sure of the continuance of their happiness for a single hour. Now, you are assured both of the fullness of their felicity, and of its fearless continuance.

We are delighted, when our children are in the successful pursuit of knowledge, in the bright path of virtue, in the possession of the esteem of the wise and good. In sending them from home, we seek to secure for them, the advantages of virtuous and refined society, the superintendance of pious and affectionate friends. Were one illustrious in power and excellence, to take a parental interest in their welfare, or were they admitted to be the companions of princes, should we be insensible to the honour? Let us not then with a wholly unreconciled spirit, see them go to be angels among angels, and to dwell gloriously in the presence of that "high and holy One, who inhabiteth Eternity."

Is it not a holy privilege to add to the number of those, who serve God without sin? You must not now behold the dazzling of their celestial wings, as they unfold them without weariness to do his will. But those whom you rocked in your cradle, whom you consecrated by prayer, and in baptism, are of that host. You cannot hear the melody of ethereal harps, attuned to unending praise. But they in whose hearts early piety was implanted by your prayers, who learned from your lips to warble the sacred hymn at eve, swell that exulting strain. Perhaps, from their cloudless abode, they still watch over you. Perhaps, with a seraph smile, they hover around you. Will they not rejoice to behold you walking to meet them, with a placid brow and submissive spirit, solacing yourself with such deeds of goodness to others, as are approved in the sight of heaven?

Afflictions, are often the instruments of increasing, and maturing, the "peaceable fruits of righteousness." Peculiar ones ought therefore to produce prominent gain. What sorrows can be more peculiar and poignant, than the desolation of parents, from whom all their children have been removed, and who stand in hopeless solitude, the last of all their race? Are they not incited to eminence in those efforts of benevolence, which contain balm for the chastened spirit?

There was one, and my heart holds her image as among the most perfect of earthly beings, who in early life was written childless. Her three beautiful sons were taken from her in one week. *In one week!* and their places were never supplied. The little student of seven years, was smitten while over his books, the second at his sports, the youngest on his mother's knee. The deepest humility, the most earnest searchings of heart, were the immediate results of this bereavement. It dwelt on her mind, that for some deficiency in her christian character, this chastisement had been appointed. The language of her contrite prayer was, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And he told her. And she became a "mother in Israel." A sleepless, untiring benevolence, was the striking lineament of her life. After the stroke of widowhood fell upon her, and she stood entirely alone, it seemed as if every vestige of selfishness was extinct, and that her whole existence was devoted to the good of others. She acquainted herself with the various necessities of the poor, the sick, the aged and the orphan. Her almoners bore gifts suited to their needs, while the giver sought to be undiscovered and unknown. Her charity shrank from the notice, and praise of man.

But especially to children, her whole soul poured itself forth. She distributed fitting books to

the idle, and to the ignorant, to the erring and to the good ; to some that they might be encouraged in the right way, and to others, that they might be allured to enter it. Those of her neighbours and friends, she gathered often around her table, made them happy by her affability, cheered them with her sweet, sacred songs, and improved the influence thus gained, to impress on them the precepts of heavenly wisdom. May I not hope, that the heart of some reader, enshrines the blessed image of the same benefactor, whose countenance was to my childhood more beautiful, amid the furrows and silver hairs of fourscore and eight years, than any where youth and bloom revelled : for it was beautiful, through the goodness that never waxeth old, and it was the eye of gratitude that regarded it.

For the stranger, the emigrant, and the poor African, how active were her sympathies. The outcast Indian, found in her mansion, bread and a garment, and what was dearer to him than all, kind, pitying words. Endowed with a lofty and cultivated intellect, and with that wealth which the world is wont to estimate still more highly, she humbled herself to the meanest creature, that she might do them good. She seemed willing to become “ their servant, for Jesus’ sake.”

What part her deep afflictions bore in this meek and sublimated benevolence, whether they

were as the crucible to the gold, or as the refiner's fire to the silver, we cannot tell: He who sent them, knoweth.

Though resignation under bereavement, or the springing of spiritual graces from its bitter root, are solemn and salutary lessons to the beholder, is it not possible to advance even higher in the school of Christ? May not a christian be able to yield without repining, the dearest idols to Him who loved him and gave himself for him? To reveal its complacence by gifts, seems to be one of the native dialects of love. The little child presents its favourite teacher, with a fresh flower. It hastens to its mother, with the first, best rose, from its little garden. In the kiss to its father, with which it resigns itself to sleep, it gives away its whole heart.

Nor does love falter, though its gifts involve sacrifices. The young bride leaves the hearth-stone of her earliest remembrances, and lifts her timid brow in the home of strangers, or follows her chosen protector to a wild land, and uninhabited, willingly trusting to him, her "all of earth, perchance, her all of heaven." The mother grudges not the pang, the faded bloom, the weary night-watchings with which she rears her infant. Must an earthly love ever transcend that which is divine? Will christian parents always yield with reluctance their children to that Beneficent Being, whom "not having seen, they love?"

“How have you attained such sweet resignation?” said a pastor to a young mother, who had newly buried her first-born. She replied, “I used to think of my boy continually, whether sleeping or waking. To me, he seemed more beautiful than other children. I was disappointed, if visitors omitted to praise his eyes, or his curls, or the robes that I wrought for him with my needle. At first, I believed it the natural current of a mother’s love. Then I feared it was pride, and sought to humble myself before Him who resisteth the proud.

One night, in dreams, I thought an angel stood beside me, and said “where is the little bud that thou nursest in thy bosom? I am sent to take it. Where is thy little harp? Give it to me. It is like those which breathe the praise of God in heaven.” I awoke in tears. My beautiful boy drooped like a bud which the worm pierces. His last wailing, was like the sad musick from shattered harp-strings. All my world seemed gone. Still, in my agony, I listened, for there was a voice in my soul, like the voice of the angel, who had warned me: “God loveth a cheerful giver.” I laid my lip on the earth, and said “let my will, be thine.” And as I arose, though the tear lay on my cheek, there was a smile there also. Since then, it has been with me. Amid the duties of every day, methinks it

says continually, "the cheerful giver! the cheerful giver!"

"That smile, said her venerable pastor, like the faith of Abraham, shall be counted unto thee as righteousness."

LETTER XXI.

SICKNESS AND DECLINE.

THOSE who are subject to varieties of physical infirmity, should study the philosophy of sickness. They should not only learn a fitting deportment under it, but seek those spiritual benefits, which all afflictions are intended to produce.

Patience, and fortitude, when we suffer, founded on the consciousness that we are in the hands of our Heavenly Father, whose love will not fail, and whose wisdom cannot err; a docile trust in the physician to whom we have confided our case; and that cheerful hope which can find the bright side of even unfavourable symptoms, or unpleasant occurrences, are among the first lessons in the science of salutary endurance. We should be careful to cultivate good feelings towards all who are around us, and to overrule the irritability which sometimes arises from obstruction in the paths of our accustomed usefulness. While by promptness in adopting appointed remedies, we voluntarily co-operate with every sanitary process, we should guard against that undue

haste to recover, which plunges ardent natures, into baneful, and even fatal imprudences.

Sometimes, a reluctance, and depression of spirits, are indulged by those who have the prospect of becoming mothers, which are both injurious, and unchristian. One of the weapons with which to repel this want of reconciliation, is drawn from the armoury of common sense. Is not the state of matrimony that, in which the Almighty has decreed our race to be perpetuated? Those, who have an unconquerable aversion to its results, ought not to place themselves in peril. If these results, were not sufficiently obvious, if they "had not been told us from the beginning, and understood from the foundations of the earth," if changes and sorrows had happened to us, which had never befallen others, we might be more justified in complaining of a state which had caused them. At present, there is neither room for surprize, nor right to murmur. As well might the voyager, who enters a ship, with full knowledge of its destination, complain of arrival at the port.

"Did I but purpose to embark with thee,
On the smooth surface of a summer sea?
But would forsake the ship and make the shore,
When the winds threaten, or the billows roar?"

The state to which we allude, involves inconveniences and sufferings, but it should be sufficient

for a christian, that Divine Wisdom has both ordained and illumined it. And how much better is it, for the individual, and for all around, how much more generous to those most interested in her welfare, that instead of yielding to lassitude, or low spirits, she should cultivate cheerfulness, and gratitude.

How sweetly do the Germans speak of a friend, with such expectations, as being in "*good hope*." The mothers of our American forests, that red-brow'd and almost forgotten race, passed with the same meek brow, and sweet-toned voice, on their life of hardship, scarcely pausing, as they planted the corn, or gathered in the harvest, or steered the canoe, or snared the habitant of the deep, until the cry of the new-born was heard. History teaches us that the Romans, and other ancient nations, laboured to make a state of gestation, one of cheerful exercise, both to the body and mind. The mother of Buonaparte, for several months before his birth, was much on horse-back, with her husband, entering into those military plans and details, which occupied his mind. Napoleon, who greatly respected her, sometimes intimated that his own structure of character, had been modified by her heroism, and often repeated emphatically, as a maxim, "*the mother forms the man.*"

The state which we mention, is doubtless a

discipline of character. Its temporary renunciation of the world's pleasures, the apprehension which it often creates, and the danger with which it may be connected, are themes for communion with Him, who alone has power to strengthen, to save, and to put into the heart, a song of new joy. It adds force and tenderness to the aspirations of the Psalmist, "Let me now fall into the hand of the Lord, for his mercies are great." Is it not a holy state? Should it not therefore be happy? Does it not call up an irrepressible courage, to know that we guard the destinies of a being never to die? Were there no physical ills connected with the name of mother, her lot would be one of too unmixed felicity, for a mortal. Other sicknesses have only the hope to recover. But in hers, there is hope both of recovery, and of gain; the great gain of adding another loving and beautiful being, to the circle already so dear; a circle, which it is her prayer may be unbroken, in a home of glory.

The care of the sick, is a science, to which time and attention should be devoted. It is a part of the business of our sex. Appointed as we are, to varieties of indisposition, we are the more readily "touched with the infirmities" of others. Let us see that our daughters are early versed in those details, by which suffering is alleviated. It is not enough to carry a nursing-

kindness in the heart. Many do this, who yet seem unable properly, or effectually to express it. While performing services in the chamber of the sick, they perhaps, forget to shade the light from the enfeebled eye, or to soften the footstep or tone for the trembling nerve, or to prepare properly, the little nourishment that impaired digestion can admit; so that with the most laborious efforts, and kindest sympathies, they fail to administer comfort.

It would seem that slow, wasting sickness, was a severe trial of the passive virtues, and the christian graces. Yet how often do we see it calling forth the most affecting patience and resignation. Among many such instances, I think now of a friend of early days, who was appointed to the debility and weariness of a long decline. Her social feelings, and her warm sympathies for others sorrow, seemed to act as remedies for her own. Without complaint, she resigned the intercourse with Nature, which had been to her, inexpressibly dear; the walk, the ride, the sight of the fresh-swelling buds on her favourite trees, and the first, soft grass, stealing with early violets, over the walks that winter had embrowned. Gradually, the books, her companions from the cradle, and her pen, so prized in her hours of intellectual musing, were resigned. Still, there was no murmur. And when, the fearful cough,

invading her last resort, almost precluded the conversation in which she both delighted and excelled, her gentle eye told the peace within. One night, which her physicians intimated would be her last on earth, I was privileged to be with her, for I desired to stand at her side, when the broken clay should yield up the beautiful spirit. Emaciation, and infantine helplessness were upon her, and delirium had dictated her broken speech, for many days. Yet she fancied herself surrounded by bright objects, by the orange-groves, and jessamine bowers of sunnier skies, and by the winged spirits of the happy dead, to whom she was so near. But though reason wandered, the memory of the heart was perfect, and I never once approached her pillow, that she did not regard me with loving eyes, or draw my head downward to hers, or detain my hand in her fluttering clasp, or thank me for the drop, with which I moistened her lips, or whisper a kind wish that I would rest beside her, and not fatigue myself for her sake. And it was the more affecting that the imperishable elements of her own lovely nature, and changeless friendship, should gleam forth with such purity, amid fragments of wild thought, and incoherent exclamations, and misty gazings into a shadowy world. And so Death stole upon her like a gentle sleep, into which she

entered with a smile ; "patience having had its perfect work."

Entire resignation, is probably the highest attainment of our faith. Though it comes forth out of "great tribulation, as the fine gold from the fire of the refiner," yet its rudiments should be studied amid the common business of life. Like Demosthenes, preserving the key-note of eloquence, amid the thunder of the sea, we should rehearse them, amid the daily throng of perplexities and toils. When serene piety has learned to surmount both the lesser, and greater evils of life, when we have no longer any will, but to accomplish that of Him who sent us, we are rapidly preparing for a removal where His face is seen without a cloud.

While a slow and hopeless decline, asks only the exercise of resignation, there are varieties of chronic disease, which require the action of other graces. Though many of the pleasures of life are stricken off, some of its duties and responsibilities remain. To balance these correctly, to endure seclusion, perhaps, to suffer pain, yet not to shrink from obligation, need the exercise of no common judgment, or in-operative piety. To cultivate any remaining capacity of usefulness, to advance the comfort of those around, is a source of consolation. This seemed to be under-

stood by the wife of the poor shepherd of Salisbury Plain, who being disabled from all use of her feet by rheumatism, was most thankful that she could still sit up in her bed, and mend clothes for her family. Equally persevering, though of a different character, was the industry of the authoress of that beautiful story, who saved the dotting of her *i*'s, and the crossing of her *t*'s, for a day of head-ache.

Protracted debility gives leisure for meditation. The mind has scope to expatiate on such opportunities of doing good, as are left within its power. How may those within its more immediate circle be benefitted? Are there any children, or young people in the household, to whom it may be a teacher of patience, and wisdom? Is there any grey-haired person whom it may make happy? The old are cheered by having the current of thought turned to their early days, and by finding an attentive listener to their narratives. Tell them also of what transpires, day by day; keep up their interest in passing events: for their memory does not decay so much from necessity, as through the neglect of others, to feed it with fresh aliment. Sometimes read or relate to them, healthful works of the imagination. They restore emotions which stir the stream of life, and keep it from growing stagnant. They bring

back a host of pleasant memories and give new life to buried joys.

It is often salutary to unite the aged, with happy and well-behaved children. The extremes of human life tend naturally and gracefully towards each other, like the horns of the waxing and waning moon. Though the chief consolation of age, should be drawn from the world which it approaches, we must not suffer it to feel useless in that world where it still lingers.

Let us grudge no exertion, whether in health or sickness, to make the aged happy, remembering how soon we must be numbered among them, if we are spared from the grave. For how silently do years steal over us. Our babes grow up, and bring their own babes to be dangled upon our knees. Still, we fail to realize how rapidly we drift down the stream of time. In the beautiful expression of Scripture, "grey hairs are here and there upon him, but he knoweth it not."

Should it be the will of our Heavenly Father, that any of us should remain after our contemporaries are gone to rest, let us strive to grow old gracefully. Let us not hastily renounce our part, in accustomed duty, or be ready to make ourselves cyphers in existence, or jealously conceive that we are burdens to those around. But, preserving an interest in the history of our own

times, and in the concerns of those around us, let us not captiously ask, "why the former days were better than these, for we do not inquire wisely concerning this."

Especially let us cultivate love and forbearance for the young. Taking part in their simple and highly-relished pleasures, let us keep our seat at life's banquet, as a satisfied, not satiated guest. Let the recollection of our own early levities, soften every disposition to censure those who are beginning the race of life; and let us teach them that the fruits of true wisdom ripen and mellow, rather than turn acid, by the accumulation of years.

Let us pay without murmuring, the tax which Earth levies upon its ancient tenants. If the deafened ear no longer excites the mind, if the right hand forgets its cunning, if the feet refuse the burden which from infancy they bore, it is because those weary labourers have need of repose. The Sabbath of existence has come. It brings with it a season of silence, in which to meditate, to release the soul from earthly ties, to prepare it for a higher state of being. Present events make but slight impression. The far-off past, is more vivid than the moving current of things. Memory reverses her tablet, bringing again the lines, with which life began. Among those traces, there will be room for penitence,

for gratitude, for renunciation of all self-righteousness. Then, may trust in a Redeemer, and well-grounded confidence of acceptance with Heaven, be the soul's incorruptible armour, as we

“Walk thoughtful on the silent, solemn shore,
Of that vast Ocean, we must sail so soon.”

LETTER XXII.

DEATH.

THERE is a subject, which perhaps, more than any other, is presented to children, erroneously, and injuriously. It is that of the exchange of worlds. They see it surrounded with every accompaniment of gloom. They may be told that the soul of the departed friend, is in a happier world. But they witness, bitter and uncontrollable mourning, and the evidence of their senses, overpowers the lifeless precept: Fear of death, takes possession of them, before they can comprehend the faith which looks beyond the coffin, the knell, and the tomb: so, that “all their lifetime, they are subject to bondage.”

Christians err, in not speaking to each other more frequently and familiarly of death. Teachers of youth, and mothers, should not hesitate to make it the theme of their discourse. And when they do so, they should divest their brow of gloom, and their tone, of sadness. While they mingle it with solemnity, they should soften it from terror, lest they bow down the tender mind,

like those heavy rains, which wash away the bloom of the unfolding flower.

I once attended a funeral in a remote village of Moravians. It was in the depth of summer. Every little garden put forth beauty, and every tree was heavy with fresh, cool verdure.

It was a sabbath afternoon, when a dead infant was brought into the church. The children of the small congregation, wished to sit near it, and fixed their eyes upon its placid brow, as on a fair piece of sculpture. The sermon of the clergyman, was to them. It was a paternal address, humbling itself to their simplicity, yet lofty, through the deep, sonorous tones of their native German. Earnestly and tenderly they listened, as he told them how the baby went from its mother's arms, to those of the compassionate Redeemer. When the worship closed, and the procession was formed, the children, two and two, followed the mourners, leading each other by the hand, the little girls clothed in white.

The place of slumber, for the dead, was near the church, where they had heard of Jesus. It was a green, beautiful knoll, on which the sun, drawing towards the west, lingered with a smile of blessing. The turf had the richness of velvet, not a weed, or a straw defaced it. Every swelling mound was planted with flowers, and a kind of aromatic thyme, thickly clustering, and almost

shutting over the small, horizontal tomb-stones, which recorded only the name, and date of the deceased. In such a spot, so sweet, so lowly, so secluded, the clay might willingly wait its reunion with the spirit.

Before the corpse, walked the young men of the village, bearing instruments of music. They paused at the gate of the place of burial. Then a strain from voice and flute, rose, subdued and tremulous, like the strings of the wind-harp. It seemed as if a timid, yet prevailing suppliant, sought admission, to the ancient city of the dead.

The gate unclosed. As they slowly wound around the gentle ascent, to the open grave, the Pastor with solemn intonation, repeated passages from the Book of God. Thrilling, beyond expression, amid the silence of the living, and the slumber of the dead, were the blessed words of our Saviour, "I am the resurrection and the life."

He ceased, and all gathered round the brink of the pit. The little ones drew near, and looked downward into its depths, sadly, but without fear. Then, came a burst of music, swelling higher and higher, till it seemed no longer of earth. Methought, it was the welcome in heaven, to the innocent spirit, the joy of angels over a new immortal, that had never sinned. Wrapped as it were, in that glorious melody, the little

body was let down to its narrow cell. And all grief, even the parent's grief was swallowed up, in that high triumph-strain. Devotion was there, giving back what it loved, to the God of love, not with tears, but with music. Faith was there, standing among flowers, and restoring a bud to the Giver, that it might bloom in a garden which could never fade.

Will those children ever forget the lesson learned at that infant's grave? When I looked on their sweet, serious faces, as they walked lovingly from the place of tombs, I thought they felt, what those of grey hairs, are often "too slow of heart to believe," that in death, there is victory.

In order to give to those whom we instruct, cheering and consoling views of Death, we must correct our own. We must make it the subject of daily contemplation, praying for divine grace, to consider it as the consummation of our highest hope, the end for which we were born, the summons to arise, and take upon us the nature of angels. We have seen, or read, with what calmness, the righteous have passed away. Sometimes, scarce a feature has been changed, a thought ruffled in the transition. Beda, while dictating from the Bible, to his disciples, put his hand into the hand of death, and scarcely felt its coldness. Herder was writing a hymn to the

Deity, with his pen upon the last line, when he passed into his presence.

We should not shun the chamber of the dying. The bed on which they lie, is the teacher of wisdom, both solemn and sublime. The pious Margaret, mother of king Henry 7th, maintained under her own roof, a number of poor persons. She supplied their wants, and consoled them in sickness, and in pain. Especially would she be always by their side, at their death, and attend them to their grave. Being asked, why she thus voluntarily exposed herself to such scenes of sadness, she replied, "*that I may learn how to die.*"

The Almighty has surrounded Death, with many circumstances of dread, that the rash and thoughtless might not rush upon it, when harrowed up by disappointment, or disgusted at the world. The heathen in his ignorance, and the sinner in his guilt, alike tremble at its approach. But the christian, should neither shrink back from the last messenger, nor grieve bitterly for those friends who are called before him. Nature's tear at parting, cannot be restrained. Yet let no violent and bitter sorrow, visit the death-bed of the christian. It is a pagan sentiment. It should find no place near their pillow, for whom Christ died. While we mourn, the happy, unfettered spirit, traverses a celestial region. It has attained a purer existence. By a voice, which our

earthly ear might not hear, God called it, and it arose, and put off its cumbrous garments, that it might perfectly do his will. An invisible hand drew it within the casement of the ark. Why should we, who still ride the billows, and bide the storm, lament for the bark that hath found a secure shelter? a haven from whence it shall go forth no more? Why should we forget to give glory to God, for having taken to unchanging bliss, the friend whom we loved?

Death, to the suffering body, and the willing soul, is the herald of release. Its terrors, for surely it hath terrors, arise from other sources: from things left undone, that ought to have been done, and from things done, that ought not to have been done. Let us guard against these fearful evils, now in the time of health and hope, and live every day, as if it were to be our last on earth. When disappointments press on the spirit, and the world seems joyless, some have mistaken this despondence for resignation to death. But the repining, with which we look on the cloud, or the tempest, or the broken idol, is not the principle which will bear us triumphantly through the dark valley. It is possible to be weary of life, and yet unwilling to die. Faithful duty, and daily penitence, and prayerful trust, are the safest armour for those, who know not at what hour they may be summoned. "Do all

things, as if you were to die to-morrow," said a writer of antiquity. Thus, Death, coming as a guest, long prepared for, may be both welcomed by us, and bear to us the welcome of angels.

We pay deference to good teachers. We desire to secure the benefits of their wisdom, for ourselves, and for our children. But who teaches like Death? Who like him reveals character? and unveils motives which had lain for many years, in a locked casket? and strips the illusion from the things which men covet? and makes us feel our own pitiable weakness, in not being able to soften the last pang for those we love? "The sun is best seen, at his rising and setting, says Boyle, so men's native dispositions are most clearly perceived, while they are children, and when they come to die." Though the chamber, where the man of wealth, meets his doom, displays every comfort and luxury that art can devise, who can behold the almost infantine helplessness of their possessor, without a new and deep feeling of the poverty of all costly things, the silk, the velvet, and the silver, which so many envy, and for which some sell their souls. Truly they seem as the "small dust of the balance," when he may not reach out a hand to touch them, or even bestow a glance upon them, for a heavy business absorbs him, and time is for him no longer, and his soul is demanded, and must go

forth, to give account of itself, and of the use it has made of those treasures from which it parts.

We should consider the goodness of God, in giving to our wearied frames the repose of the grave. The dim eye seeks a long sleep. The ear rests from the toil of gathering sounds. The lip grows silent. The limbs cease from their labour. The senses, those reporters of the mind, resign their office. In the citadel of life, the sentinels slumber. The red fluid, so long circulating through its thousand channels, stagnates. The clay-fabric, mysteriously tenanted by the unresting spirit, is ready to dissolve. “God giveth his beloved, sleep.”

Let not the couch where Nature takes her last farewell, be troubled by demonstrations of undisciplined sorrow, from those who surround it. The ill-judged efforts of friends, too often heighten the suffering they would fain relieve. Changes of position, fruitless attempts to administer medicine, or nourishment, the restless officiousness of grieving affection, distress the voyager to the world of spirits. Even a heathen Emperor could counsel that the great transition should be made with calmness. “Thou hast taken ship, thou hast sailed, thou hast come to land. Go tranquilly out of the ship into another life. Are not the Gods there?”

Death, physiologically considered, is the tend-

ing of the mortal part, to its appointed and needful rest. It is not probably attended by the extreme agony, with which imagination invests it. The principle of consciousness is often sooner released, than some of the organs on which it has been accustomed to act. They continue a part of their functions, from habit, rather than volition ; as the strings of the harp, may vibrate with a prolonged echo, after the hand that swept them has departed. So that the friend, on whose convulsions we gaze, is sometimes insensible to the pain at whose indications we shudder.

But admitting that the pangs of death, transcend what have been endured through life. How brief are they, how unworthy to be “compared to the glory that shall be revealed.” May we not even suppose the happiness of heaven, to be heightened by the contrast ? The deep darkness of the shadowy vale, yielding to a day which knows no night, the sharp severance of body and soul, lost in those pleasures which the “heart of man hath never conceived,” the moans of dissolution, exchanged for the music of cherubim and seraphim, the tear of parting from earthly friends, forgotten in the greeting of the “spirits of the just, made perfect,” what is there in the whole range of material things, that can furnish type or shadow of such a contrast ? Was it not in the mind of the eloquent Pascal, when he said, “the

glory of our faith, shines with much greater brightness, by our passing to immortality, through the shades of death.”

How many instances have we known, of not merely a calm departure, but a joyful translation, to the realms of bliss. A pious clergyman of Scotland, had lived to a venerable old age. One morning, after breakfasting with his family, he reclined a while in his chair, silently meditating. Suddenly he spoke, “Daughter, hark! doth not my Master call me?” Asking for his Bible, he perceived that his eyes were dim, and he could no longer read its precious words. “Find for me, said he, the eighth chapter of Romans, and lay my finger on the passage, “I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” “Now is my finger placed upon these blessed words?” Being assured that it was, he said, “Then God bless you, God bless you all, dear children. I have refreshed myself with you this morning, and shall be at the banquet of my Saviour, ere it is night.” And thus he died.

Another pious man, who had practised daily reading and explaining the Scriptures in his family, continued it, during his last illness. Once,

while remarking upon a chapter, he suddenly exclaimed, "What brightness do I see? Have you lighted any candles?" They replied that they had not, for it was a summer's afternoon, and the twilight had not yet come. Then, in a clear, glad voice, he said, "now, farewell, world! and welcome heaven! for the day-star from on high, hath visited me. Oh, speak it when I am gone, and tell it at my funeral, that God dealeth familiarly with man. I feel his mercy, I see his majesty, whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth. But I behold things unutterable." And filled with joy, he expired.

Once, when Spring had begun to quicken the swelling buds, a fair form that was wont to linger among them, came not forth from her closely-curtained chamber. She was beautiful and young, but Death had come for her. His purple tinge, was upon her brow. The lungs moved feebly, and with a gasping sound. It would seem that speech had forsaken her. The mother bent over her pillow. She was her only one. Earnestly she besought her for one word, "only one more word, my beloved." It was in vain.

Yet again, the long fringes of her blue eyes opened, and what a bursting forth of glorious joy! They were raised upward, they expanded, as though the soul, would spring from them in ecstasy. Then, there was a whispering of the

pale lips. The mother knelt down, and covered her face. She knew that the darling whom she had brought into the world, was to be offered up.

But there was one, deep, sweet, harp-like articulation, "*praise*." And all was over. Then, from that kneeling mother, came the same tremulous word "*praise*." Yet there was an ashy paleness on her brow, and they laid her fainting, by the side of the breathless and beautiful. There she revived, and finished the sentence that the young seraph had begun, "*praise ye the Lord*." The emotions of that death-scene, were too sublimated for tears.

More surely might we hope thus to part with our dear ones, and thus to die in Jesus, did we, in our brief probation, live near him, and for him. Friends, who have with me, meditated on many duties, and on the event that terminates them, dear friends, whom I shall never see in the flesh, may we meet in the vestments of immortality. With those, whom we have given birth, and nurtured, and borne upon our prayers, in the midnight watch, and at the morning dawn, may we stand, *not one lost*, a glorious company, where is neither shade of infirmity, or sigh of penitence, or fear of change, but where "*affection's cup hath lost the taste of tears*."

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